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OR,
The Night Hawks of North River.

The Romance of Convict 2002.

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AUTHOR OF "BROADWAY BILLY" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE NIGHT TRAGEDY.

"YOU shall never tell what you know!"
Vengefully the words were hissed, the lifted arm descended, and the man addressed fell lifeless at the feet of his assailant.

It was night, between the hours of twelve and one, and this scene occurred upon the rear lower

THE MURDERER LIFTED BROADWAY BILLY CLEAR OF THE DECK AND FLUNG HIM OVER THE RAIL.

deck of one of the ferryboats plying between Jersey City and New York.

The two men had there met, by chance as it seemed, and this was the outcome of some hot, hasty words which had passed between them.

But, there was a witness to the dark deed, and scarcely sooner had the victim been struck down than another man sprung upon the murderer, something glittering in his hand.

"Assassin!" he cried. "You are my prisoner!"

"Never!" was the fierce response.

As quick as thought the murderer's arm was lifted to deal another blow with a deadly slung-shot, but a revolver thrust in his face deterred him—for the moment at least.

"Who in Jericho are you, anyhow?" was hotly demanded.

"I am Billy Weston, the detective. Drop that thing, if you please, and put up your hands!"

"You shall never take me alive!" the man snarled. "It must be your life or mine, here and now! You shall not escape with the secret you hold—I swear it!"

While yet speaking he had leaped forward with the quickness of a tiger, and with a grip of steel seized the wrist of the hand holding the revolver, at the same time bringing down the poised slung-shot with deadly force; but, the free hand of the alert detective arrested the blow.

Thus for a moment they stood, locked, wrist holding wrist, and then began a deadly struggle for the mastery.

The detective could have called for help, but his professional pride deterred him from doing that save as a last resort, for he wanted to take his man unaided if he could.

Their struggle, however, was of short duration. Broadway Billy's foot slipped before he had a fair chance to test his strength against his foe, and the unknown instantly had him at a disadvantage. Fortune had seemed to favor the assassin.

"Ha! I've got you!" he cried exultingly. "Your fate is settled now, curse you!"

One hand was clapped over the detective's mouth, from behind, and with the strength of a giant, almost, the murderer lifted Broadway Billy clear of the deck and flung him over the rail.

Turning instantly, he picked up his first victim and hurled him overboard as though the body had been only that of a boy. No one witnessed the deed, and the dark Hudson River flowed on its silent way, dumb guardian over the secrets that had been committed to its keeping.

"My curse follow you both to perdition!" the murderer cried; and looking sharply around to make sure no one was near, he shook his fist at the water with ferocity.

"The detective is not yet born who can take *me* prisoner!" And turning, then, he coolly lighted a cigar and sauntered through the boat to the forward end, and who could guess the truth concerning him?

CHAPTER II.

BROADWAY BILLY MISSING.

The superintendent looked up, and smiled when he saw who his callers were.

"Well, and what is it brings you here, my lads?" he cordially inquired. "Sit down and tell me."

The callers were Happy Harry and Silent Seth, and by their faces the superintendent was able to detect that the matter which had brought them there was something serious.

"Do you know where Broadway Billy is, sir?" Happy Harry immediately asked.

"No, I do not; is he missing?"

"Yes, sir; been gone two days, now, and not a word from him. We are beginning to get uneasy about him."

"This is strange," the superintendent mused. "This is not Broadway Billy's way, to go off and not let you know where he is.

What is the last you know about his movements?"

"He went over to Jersey City night before last to visit a friend," explained Silent Seth.

"Have you been to see that friend, then?"

"Yes, sir. He says Mr. Weston left him a little before midnight and took a Montgomery street car at Bergen avenue for the ferry. And, that is the last we know about him. What do you suppose can have happened to him, sir?"

"That is a pretty hard question to answer. Maybe he has met with foul play, for there are a good many rascals who have no friendly feeling toward him. I will put a man on his track and see what can be learned about him, for it is plain that something is wrong."

"We knew you would help us," said Harry, "and that's why we came here, sir."

"Yes, you could count on my help where Broadway Billy is concerned," the superintendent assured. "By the way, had Billy any case on hand at the time, that you are aware of?"

"No, sir; he had nothing on hand, far as we know. We had been three or four days without anything to do."

"Well, keep your eyes and ears open, and if I learn anything I'll let you know."

Thanking him, the boys took their leave.

They returned at once to Broadway Billy's office, Harry keeping up a constant flow of small talk on the way.

When they arrived, they were just in time to meet a woman who was turning away from the office door as they came to the landing at the head of the stairs leading up from the street.

"Did you want to see Mr. Weston?" asked Happy Harry immediately.

"Yes," was the response. "Do you belong here? Can you tell me where he is? I came to see him on business."

"We belong here, yes," was Harry's rejoinder; "but tell you where the boss is, we can't. He hasn't been home for a couple of days now, and we don't know anything about him."

Harry and Seth had agreed that it was no use to keep this fact secret any longer.

Seth had by this time opened the door, and they invited the woman in, an invitation which she accepted they having explained who they were.

"You say Mr. Weston has been missing a couple of days?" she questioned, taking a seat and throwing her veil up from her face. "The business which has brought me here has something to do with that very same thing."

She was a young woman, maybe twenty-years of age, and possessed of a full share of good looks.

"Somebody missing, do you mean?" asked Harry.

"Yes; and my object in coming was to see if I could engage Mr. Weston to find him—if he can."

"Well you can engage him, we can answer for that; that is, when he turns up himself. You may give us the particulars, and we'll tell him about it as soon as he comes."

"I will do that, for I have heard much about Mr. Weston and have the greatest confidence in his ability. The name of the missing man is Richard Redwood, and this is his photograph, taken only a short time ago. Having it, I thought it best to bring it with me."

"That was the right thing to do," Harry approved. "Now, let us get at this thing straight. Seth, you take notes, seeing that you can't talk, and I'll try to get at the leading points the same as the boss would himself. Now, before we go any further, miss, what is your name and where do you live?"

Harry was taking hold of the matter in a business-like way, and he gave Seth a sly wink.

"My name is Star Rollson," the young woman answered promptly, "and my home is Lynwood, New Jersey."

Seth made note of these points.

"Now, what about Mr. Redwood?" Harry next asked. "Who and what was he? and what was the last you knew about him? Mr. Weston will want to know everything you are able to tell."

"And I want to tell everything I possibly can," the young woman frankly declared. "I am only sorry that Mr. Weston is not here himself, but I am sure you are to be trusted or you would not be in his employ. Mr. Redwood was employed as cashier in the large mercantile house of Ridgeway & Woodpath, of this city."

"Have you inquired for him there?" Harry asked.

"Yes, alas!"

"What makes you say that?"

"Why, they say his money account is short, and they believe he has run away to avoid arrest."

"Which looks bad for Mr. Redwood. If his account is not up to the scratch, and he is gone, you can't blame them for thinking he has skipped out. How much is missing?"

"Several thousand dollars, they told me. But, they do not know Dick Redwood as I know him, or they would never think him guilty of such a thing! Why, he was the soul of honor—"

"You'll excuse me," Harry interrupted, "but what was this person to you? A cousin of yours, or something of that sort?"

The young woman blushed prettily.

"Nothing of that sort," she responded. "He was my promised husband, as I must tell you so that your employer will understand fully."

"That's right; don't keep anything back. Now for my other question: When was Mr. Redwood seen last?"

"Night before last, when he paid a visit to me at my home at Lynwood."

"What time did he start to return to the city?" Harry inquired.

"He took a late train, and should have reached here a little before one o'clock in the morning."

"Christopher Columbia!" cried Harry, leaping to his feet. "That night was ripe for missing men, no mistake! Does anybody know whether he came through or not, Miss Rollson?"

"Yes; the conductor of the train. He knew him, and says he bade him good-night after the train stopped in the station at Jersey City, and saw him walk off in the direction of the ferry. That is the last that is known about him."

CHAPTER III.

REDWOOD'S GUILT SHOWN.

HAD the questioner been Broadway Billy, more information might have been obtained. As it was, the young woman took her leave, after a further talk with the boys, without having dropped anything more of importance.

"Well, what do you think of all this, Sphinx?" demanded Harry, as soon as she had left the office.

"As near as I can figure it," Silent Seth made reply, "the boss and that man Redwood must have reached the ferry at about the same time that night."

"Crackers an' cheese! That's so fer a fack! But what is there in that? One fellow had been to see his girl, and the other had been to visit a friend, and it isn't likely the same thing has happened to both."

"Unless there was an accident."

"And if there had been it would have appeared in the papers."

"Maybe the boss got onto the fact that the fellow had been stealing, and followed him off."

"Then why wouldn't he let us know where he is? No, that won't work; that is,

unless the fellow has done him up—maybe killed him. I feel the fever working on me, Seth!"

"I think we'll have to buckle on the armor, Harry, and wade in and do something. We must find the boss or bust trying; and, as he isn't here to begin this new case, we must begin it ourselves. It won't do to let anything get out of our net, you know."

They talked it over at length, and came to the conclusion that they had better go at once and see the superintendent again.

"What! Back again so soon?" that official greeted them, upon their arrival at his office. "What have you learned? Has Billy turned up all right? But, I argue not."

It was as though he could read their thoughts.

"No, sir; he hasn't turned up, but something else has," Happy Harry proceeded to explain. And he told as briefly as possible about the caller who had been to the office, and her business there.

"It is a striking coincidence, at any rate," the superintendent commented, when he had heard all Harry had to tell. "But, there is no doubt about the guilt of Redwood, I think; I have that case already, and my men are looking for him. I am glad for the clue you have put in my hands."

"What clue?" asked Harry, wonderingly.

"Why, you have disclosed where Redwood was that night. I had not been able to get on his track after he left the office."

"Oh! I see. Couldn't think what you were getting at. Fell over myself, as it were. Then you think Redwood is guilty, spite of what the young lady says about him, do you?"

"Yes, I do. The young woman loves him, you see, and love is blind. This case was put into my hands by Ridgeroad & Woodpath, and they are level-headed men of business who would not proceed in such a matter upon mere suspicion. I don't see any room for doubt."

"But, all the same, it's plain the young woman don't think him guilty, or she would not want him found."

"A woman shuts both eyes when she is thoroughly in love, my boy."

"Well, what had we better do?"

"Work on these cases all you can, and in the absence of your chief, report to me anything you may able to learn."

With that understanding the lads took leave, and next found themselves at the business place of Ridgeroad & Woodpath.

It was a large wholesale and retail mercantile house, doing business in many lines, and having a large force of clerks in its various departments, all busy as bees.

"Well, what can we do for you, young gentlemen?" a man asked, almost as soon as they had entered.

"We are here to see the head of the establishment, sir," Harry answered.

"Are you looking for situations?"

"No; we are here from the office of Mr. Weston, the detective, sir."

"Oh! Something about Redwood, I suppose. Well, I am the head of this department, and you may—"

"We must see the head boss of all, if you please," Harry insisted. "Just give us his name and we'll hunt him up, if you are busy and in a hurry to—"

"No, I'll take you to him—Ha! here comes Mr. Breaumont. These young gentlemen are here from Weston's Detective Agency, sir, and want to see about the Redwood affair."

The man who came forward was a tall, broad-shouldered fellow, and rather good-looking.

He showed interest at once, and motioned the boys to follow him into his private office further back in the room.

"Now, what is it, my lads?" he inquired, "Are you the head of this place?" asked

Harry. "We want to begin at the top of the pile."

"I am one or the firm, if that is what you mean. I have this business of Redwood's in hand. My name is Bradford Breaumont, and I am the head of the department Mr. Redwood was in."

"If that's the case, you are the man we want to see. Mr. Weston has been engaged to hunt for Mr. Redwood, and we have come to ask about the proof that he is guilty of having robbed his employers. The person who engaged Mr. Weston thinks him innocent."

The man smiled.

"It is useless for any one to think that," he said. "The proof is all against him, and if he is found it will go hard with him. His accounts are short something like twenty thousand dollars, which he has been covering with forged paper and which was bound to be discovered at our next examination. He had every reason in the world to run away."

"Then it isn't likely that he will be found in a hurry."

"I do not think he will. The police are on the lookout for him, but he has the start of them by two days."

"What was the last you knew about him, sir?"

"When he left the office day before yesterday. He has not been heard of since, to my knowledge."

"Yes, he has been, sir, for we have a later clue than that. He was at Lynwood that night, and left for this city at a late hour."

"Ha! how do you know this?"

"Because the person who has engaged Mr. Weston to look for him came from that place, and she told us."

"And who was that person?"

"A Miss Rollson."

"Ah, yes! I know her. Redwood was paying attention to her, I believe. Well, if found, he will be another for prison. She already has a brother in the State Prison for life. She had better let the matter rest, and let her lover make the most of his liberty. But tell me, how is it *you* have come here upon this matter, and not your employer himself?"

"The boss is absent just now, sir."

"Are you carrying on the business in his absence?"

"Yes, sir."

"He must have considerable of confidence in you to let you go ahead with a case like this. I understood you to say Mr. Weston had sent you here."

"Don't see how you could understand it that way, when we didn't say anything of the kind," Happy Harry corrected. "I told you Mr. Weston has been engaged to hunt for Mr. Redwood, and that we have come to ask about him."

"Yes, I guess that is straight. I inferred that he had sent you. But no matter about that. I suppose Miss Rollson insists upon believing her lover innocent, and wants him hunted up in order that he may establish his innocence, eh? It is too bad that she should be so deceived."

"Yes, that's the way she looks at it, sir."

"Well, Dick has fooled us all, for no one would have thought it of him. I never knew a better fellow in my life, and it was hard to believe him guilty."

"S'pose there is no chance for a mistake in the matter, is there?"

"Oh, no; none whatever. We tried to give him the benefit of every circumstance, but the further we looked the darker it appeared."

"That being the case," spoke up Silent Seth, "I think we had better drop the matter, Harry. If we find the man for Miss Rollson it will only be to hand him over to the officers."

"Don't know but you are right, Stoick. Anyhow, we'll let it rest till the boss turns up."

"Is your employer out of town, then?" inquired Breaumont.

"The fact of the business is, sir," explained Harry, "he is missing, about the same as your man Redwood."

"Missing? Detective Weston missing? But, his case cannot be like this of Redwood's, as you say; Redwood is a defaulter, you must bear in mind."

"Oh! we didn't mean that; but, he is gone in about the same mysterious way as Redwood; and, what makes it all the more strange, he seems to have disappeared about the same time and place."

"That so? You quite interest me."

"And, we have thought that maybe he got onto Mr. Redwood and followed him off, and maybe has got into trouble."

"That being the case, you will not be wise in giving up your search for Redwood, for searching for him you may be able to learn something about your employer. But, it is not likely that harm has come to him."

"Don't know about that; Broadway Billy has a good many enemies who would get in a crack at him if chance offered."

"Yes, I suppose so; but, what has led you to think both disappeared about the same time and place, as you express it? You must have grounds for that belief, I can imagine."

"You bet, we have! We happen to know that both of them took the ferry for New York from Jersey City at about the same time, and that's the last that is known about them. That isn't much to know, but it is a starting-point, you see. It looks like a mystery."

"It does, true enough; and, your suspicion may be correct. I'll tell you what I would do, if I were you."

"And what is that?"

"I would keep this clue to myself and work it on the quiet. No use your letting the police into your secret, for they will rob you of the honor if it should lead to the arrest of Redwood."

"That is just what I have thought about," spoke up Silent Seth, before Harry could rejoin. And Mr. Breaumont being called just then, their conversation came to an end and the two lads took their leave, discussing the matter at length on their way to the office.

CHAPTER IV.

CONVICT NO. 2002.

THE prison of the State at Trenton is no exception to the rule that prisons the world over are gloomy institutions.

One afternoon, on a day and at an hour when visitors are admitted, a veiled woman entered the office of the prison mentioned, showed a pass and asked to see Convict No. 2002.

The attendant consulted his register for a moment, and remarked:

"That is Henry Rollson."

"Yes," the low-spoken answer.

"And you are—"

"His sister, sir."

"Please register here, miss, and I will admit you."

The woman put back her vail, and taking the pen, wrote in the place indicated—

"Star Rollson."

It was the same good-looking young lady who, on the previous day, had called at the office of Detective William Weston—"Broadway Billy."

Having registered, she was conducted by one of the prison attendants into the interior of the gloomy place, her guide finally stopping before the door of the cell occupied by her brother.

Unlocking the door, he admitted her, and instantly the brother and sister were in each other's embrace, tears in the eyes of both.

Their greeting was a silent one, and as soon as it was over the convict gave his

visitor the only seat the cell contained, he seating himself upon the edge of the iron-framed bed.

"This is another visit sooner than I expected, Star," he observed.

"Yes, Henry, I have come before the time promised, I know, but I find you are no less glad to see me."

"No, indeed! You are the one bright star of my blighted life, Star, and my poor pun is no joke, either. But, what has brought you thus soon? Your coming almost gives me hope anew."

Although in the regulation garb of the prison, with his face clean-shaved and hair close-cropped, there was something noble about this convict.

His was not the typical convict's head, with low, retreating forehead and habitually scowling brows.

Instead, both head and face were of splendid form, feature and expression.

He was a young man, perhaps twenty-six.

"It is no good news I bring you, Henry," the young woman confessed, sadly. "A ray of hope I had for your release has been suddenly dashed to earth, and a new and terrible trouble has come upon me—almost greater than I am able to bear."

"My poor Star!" taking one of her hands in both of his. "What is it now, my sister? Helpless as I may be to aid you, you know you can ever rely upon the sympathy of my heart."

"Yes, I know that well, Henry, and believe me, I would not come to heap new troubles upon you did I not need your advice in this matter."

"Think not of that, not for a moment. Think of the shame my being here has brought upon you!"

"But, you are innocent, Henry!"

"Yes, as I have time and time again assured you, Star, I am innocent. Were I guilty, I would soon end my wretched life, so that you might never have to face the shame of coming to the State's Prison to see your brother! But, tell me what is on your heart, now, Star."

"Oh! Henry, Dick is missing, and—"

"What? Dick Redwood missing? What has become of him, Star?"

"I—I don't know; I wish I did. At the office they say he has run away—that his accounts are twenty thousand dollars short."

"My God!"

The convict sprung to his feet, consternation depicted upon his face.

"But, you do not believe it of him, do you, Henry?" the young woman hastened to question.

"Believe it of him, Star? Never! Dick Redwood is the soul of honor, and I am sure there must be some mistake. But, tell me all about it; the whole were better than this suspense."

"It is soon told, brother: Three nights ago he came out to Lynwood to see me, and took the late train in to the city. The conductor says he saw him in the station at Jersey City, and saw him going toward the ferry. That is the very last that is known about him."

"Wonderful! But, go on."

"Well, I knew nothing about his absence till I saw it in the paper, and I went at once to the office to learn the truth. I was almost overcome when they told me. His accounts are twenty thousand dollars short, as I said, and they have set the police at work to find him. Oh! Henry! it is not possible that he can be guilty! Tell me you do not believe it of him."

"I have already told you so, Star. But, if his accounts are really short to such an extent, how is it to be explained? What did they say about it there?"

"That he had been hiding it under forged papers—Oh! my heart will break. I cannot bear this new trouble."

"I tell you, Star, *I don't believe it!*" with a sudden burst of determination. "There is something back of all this! Dick Redwood was no thief, no matter what they say of him!"

"Oh! I am so glad you believe him innocent, Henry. But, where is he? What has become of him?"

"Would that I could tell you! You must employ a detective at once."

"I have already done that."

"Whom have you engaged?"

"Detective Weston, him they call Broadway Billy."

"Excellent! I have heard a good deal about him, in prison though I am, and I have been thinking of putting my own case in his hands."

"But, there is something mysterious about it all, Henry, and the more I think about it the more puzzling it seems to grow. Detective Weston, too, is missing, and his disappearance dates from about the same hour as Dick's."

Thereupon the young woman hastened to give her brother all the particulars of the matter as they were known to her.

The convict listened in silence to the end, a thoughtful expression upon his face.

Even when she had done, he did not speak for some time.

"It is a mysterious matter, truly, as you say," he finally commented, in a meditating way. "How did he act while he was with you that evening? Was he like his usual self?"

"Yes; I noticed nothing different about him, and I cannot recall anything as I have thought it all over since. But, here is something I have not told you: He said he had not been idle regarding you, and that he had discovered something that was likely to prove your innocence."

"Ha! is that so?"

"Yes; but, he did not tell me what it was."

The convict's face grew clouded again, the brief ray of hope vanishing as suddenly as it had come.

"That is too bad," he complained. "He ought to have told you, for who can tell but that may have had something to do with his disappearance? Did you ask him to tell you, Star?"

"Yes, I asked him, Henry, but he said it were better that he should keep it locked in his own breast yet awhile."

"Too bad, too bad; and, now he is gone—who can say where?"

"But, you still believe him innocent, do you not, Henry? It would kill me did I think you doubted him."

"Innocent? I believe him as innocent of that theft, Star, as I am innocent of the murder of Harvey Carters! God knows I am innocent of that, convict for life though I am."

"Yes, brother, I know you are innocent; and, Dick never doubted you, either. He was earnest in the work he began, the work of proving your innocence; and now to think this dark cloud should fall upon his own good name—Oh! it is too bad, too bad! What can I do, Henry?"

"You have done the only thing I can think of, Star."

"Why, I have done nothing at all—"

"Yes, you have; you have employed a detective. But, you said he, too, is mysteriously missing!"

"Yes; and there is something about it all, something which I am not able to understand. I have told you about the queer coincidence, however. What do you make out of it?"

"I can make nothing out of it, sister dear; I am all in the dark. But, whatever comes, I will not doubt Dick's innocence."

"How glad I am to hear you say that! You, better than any one else, know something about the terrible fallibility of circum-

stantial evidence. It almost cost you your life."

The convict shivered at the recollection of his trial.

"Yes, you are right," he responded. "I do know how unreliable it is. They say I killed Harvey Carters, when I am as innocent of his blood as you are, Star. It was only by a hard fight that my sentence was made imprisonment for life instead of hanging."

"With life there is hope."

"Were I without hope, I could not endure this existence an hour. Hope is all that keeps me alive—hope that the truth may one day come to light and my good name and honor be restored."

"As it certainly will, Henry, if we are only prayerful and patient. God is not going to let you lie here with the sin and shame of another's crime upon you. He will bring you out in His own good time."

"I wish I had more of your sweet religious faith, Star. I hope with you, anyhow, that all will yet come out right. But, how can the terrible evidence ever be explained away? The blood on my coat, the blood-stained dagger in my pocket, the fact that Harvey and I had quarreled."

"I know not how, Henry, but I do know that it will be done. You know the word says that all things work together for good to them that love God."

"Yes; and I know that you love Him, Star. You believe, then, that Dick's disappearance is all right?"

"Oh! if we could only see ahead! We see only the dark present."

"Well, well, Star—my star of hope! press on. You must keep me posted, for I shall be eager to learn everything that happens. Have you been to the police about Dick—But, they are looking for him, you said."

"Yes, you might be sure they are. I hope they will not find him till something can be done toward establishing his innocence, however. What, my hour up so soon? Then I must say good-by for this time, Henry. Be of good cheer, dear brother, till I see you again."

And so she left him, with a smile, but no sooner had she turned away than tears filled her pretty eyes to running over.

CHAPTER V. GOOGIN'S GROGGERY.

ABOUT the vilest hole in all Jersey City was a den down near the water front known as Googin's Groggery.

It was a resort for the worst kind of roughs and toughs, and more than once had the police descended upon it and thinned out its inmates for recruits for the Penitentiary.

Let us enter the place in imagination; far be it from us to enter such a hole in any other manner.

It was night, and the sickly yellow lights were all ablaze, giving a deathly hue to the patrons of the den—a foreshadowing, perhaps, of the grim destroyer already upon their track with the wages of sin for their reward.

The air was murky with the smoke of vile cigars and stinking pipes; a cracked and wheezy barrel organ was making a sad apology for music; women and men were dancing in the rear part of the room; in the foreground was the bar, with its array of deadly poisons.

Between the bar and the dancers were tables, most of which were occupied by men and women drinking.

The proprietor of the "dive" was behind the bar, a big, brutal-faced fellow, such as no honest man would care to meet on a lonely road by night; and he was talking with another as rascally-looking as himself.

"You's rollin' in wealt' ergain, I see, Dirty Dan," the proprietor offered remark.

"Bet yer life I am, Googy, old boy!" the other fellow responded.

"You must be workin' a soft snap." "Dat's what I am, fer a fact. I know where it grows, Googy. Set 'em up ergain, and take somethin' yerself."

This the proprietor of the hell-hole was nothing loth to do, and they went through the absurd performance of drinking poison to each other's good health and long life!

The name of the proprietor was Mickey Googin, familiarly known as "Googy." His compeer was one Dan Shanley, who, owing to his untidy and unkempt habits and appearance, had long since come to be called "Dirty Dan." And the name fitted him well, it must be added.

"Can't you take a feller in wid ye, Dan?" Googin asked.

"Nixey, McGinnis!" Dirty Dan answered, with a slow wink with one eye. "You ain't in dis, Googy."

"Dat's what's de matter; I want ter git in. Every little while you come in here jest lousy wid wealt', an' I begin ter t'ink you do know where it grows, fer a fack."

Dirty Dan laughed, and thrusting his hand into one of his pockets drew out a goodly roll of bills.

"Ain't dem good fer sore eyes?" he demanded. "I don't owe you not'in', Googy, dough, an' I don't want no pardner in dis t'ing. See? You's a good feller, but I don't want ter divvy."

"Well, I ain't gittin' mad wid ye on dat 'count, Dirty Dan; you's a right ter do as ye please 'bout dat. You's a good feller, too, an' I'm glad ter see ye in de swim. You want ter look out, dough, dat some feller don't lay ye out an' go t'rough ye fer de scads."

"I kin take care of dat, you bet. Hello! what's dis comin'?"

"Looks like he's a coal-heaver on some steamer. Mebby he's jes' got his pay, Dan."

"An' dat's a hint fer me ter work him fer all he's worth, hey? Well, I'm de boy can do dat, you bet. Hello, dere, Cully; how you was, anyhow?"

A new-comer had just entered the room, a coal-dirty fellow in the dress of a steamship stoker, and was looking about him in a half-timid manner like a cat in a strange garret.

"Did you speak to Hi?" the new-comer asked, in tone and accent that were unmistakably indigenous to Liverpool.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Dirty Dan, in which Googin joined. "Yes, I spoke ter you, Britisher. You look like a likely sort o' chap; what's yer name?"

"Hi ham called Dusty Dick, 'cause ye can't hoften see my skin for coal dust, don't ye know," was the cheery response. "Hi'm ha bloomin' bloker from right hout hof the mud hof the Mersey."

Dirty Dan laughed again, louder than before, this time joined by quite a number of the crowd; for the stranger's broad accent had drawn attention to him.

"Well, ye look dusty, an' dat's a fack," Dirty Dan commented upon his appearance. "Come, ain't ye goin' ter say somethin'?"

"There's ha pair hof us, Hi should say, hif Hi must say hanything," was the quick rejoinder.

That made another laugh, this time at Dirty Dan's expense.

"De boy is yer match, Dan," said Googin.

"I guess he is, Googy, fer a fack," Dirty Dan admitted. "But, he didn't git on to what I meant. I mean, Dusty Dick, ain't ye goin' ter treat? Dat's der proper t'ing ter do."

"Ay, Hi don't care hif Hi do; but Hi can't treat the 'ouse, you know. Me stuff won't stand hit, don't you see. What will 'e take?"

"Hot spiced fer me, Googy," Dirty Dan ordered, promptly.

"An' what is yourn?" to the stoker.

"Hi guess Hi will 'ave ha mug o' ot beef, hif ye don't mind," Dusty Dick decided, quickly. "Hi like that, don't ye know."

"Bah! Dat's baby pap!" sneered Dirty Dan, disdainfully. "Ye had better order somethin' what'll put whiskers on yer chin, young feller. Dat stuff's only made fer kids!"

"Can't help hit hif hit his; Hi was sick comin' hover, hand the doctor said Hi mustn't touch hanything strong hin six months, hif Hi wanted to live; hand 'e gave me 'ot beef, hand Hi tell 'e Hi liked hit! 'Ot beef for Hi, hif you please, sir; Hi know what Hi want."

"Let der feller have what he wants, Dan," said Googin. "He didn't make no kick 'bout yourn."

"Dat's all right; let him have dishwater, if he wants it; it's nothin' ter me."

"Hand Hi'm ha-payin' for hit, hany'ow," added the dusty stoker.

"Dat's wot's der matter," approved Googin.

"What his your name, hif Hi might make bold to ask?" the stoker inquired of Dirty Dan.

"Me name's Dan Shanley, and I ain't ashamed of it, either. Dey call me Dirty Dan fer short, an' I'm quite proud of de honor. I ain't none too clean, I own."

"Hi should say you wasn't! Us would make a good pair, mate; Dusty Dick hand Dirty Dan. Ay, ay, a good pair. But let's sit down hand talk hand get hacquainted while we drink hour 'ot. Hi think Hi could make good friends with 'e, mate, hif you could with Hi."

They took seats at one of the tables, and carried on their talk in a friendly manner as they sipped their beverages.

Dusty Dick had his new acquaintance in an almost constant roar of laughter, and at the end of an hour it looked as though they had become fast friends for life.

By the time the stoker had disposed of three or four hot teas he became as jolly as though he had been indulging in something stronger than harmless beef extract, and finally he mounted the table and sung a song.

His song was a typical English ballad, and it fairly brought down the house.

The *encore* had barely ceased when another new-comer entered the den, to be recognized immediately by some of the *habitués* of the place and greeted with a shout.

"His Nibs!" was the cry raised. "Here's His Royal Nibs!"

The dancing had ceased, the dancers having stopped to listen to the young Englishman's song; and the whole crowd, almost, took up the shout, proving that the newcomer was no stranger there, whoever he might be.

He was a man above the medium height, with red whiskers, and clad in the once elegant but now rather shabby attire of a coachman who had, perhaps, in better days, served in that capacity to some shining star of the *elite* Four Hundred of the great city just across the river.

He bowed, smiled and waved his hand toward the crowd, but stepped immediately to the bar and asked:

"Have you seen Dirty Dan to-night, Mr. Googin?"

"Sure I have," was the prompt response. "He is right dere, by one of de tables, Mr. Larkins."

"Here I am," Dan Shanley called out. "Here's a seat fer ye, Mr. Larkins. I wasn't lookin' fer ye, but I'm glad to see ye all de same. See? Come right dis way, old boy!"

"Ha! it is there you are, hey? All right, I'm with you in a minute. Here, Mr. Googin, take this and set 'em up for the house."

As he spoke the man handed a bill of no mean denomination across the bar.

"Dat's His Royal Nibs!" some one cried out. "He never drops in but he sets 'em up fer de crowd!"

"You's a corker, Mr. Larkins, dat's what

you are!" from another. "We'll put it down to your good healt' an' long an' merry life, you bet. Come along, gals, an' drink wid us."

And so the whole disreputable horde of them crowded to the bar, while Mr. Larkins, with a wave to dismiss all thanks, stepped forward to where Dirty Dan was seated, offering his hand when he reached him; Dan giving his own in a cordial manner.

"How is t'ings?" Dan inquired.

"Flourishing," the response. "But, who is this with you, Dan?"

He put the question as he drew out a chair and sat down, indicating Dan's new acquaintance by a nod.

"Dis?" repeated Dan. "Dis is a frien' of mine, Mr. Larkins; Dick Brick—an' he is a brick, too, I'm tellin' ye! Dey call him Dusty Dick, fer handy. Dick, dis is my frien' Mr. Larkins.

"Proud an' 'appy to know ye, Mr. Larkins," Dusty Dick greeted, offering his grimy paw.

Larkins shook hands with him.

"I have come to see you on business, Dan," he then said, turning his attention to Shanley. "Maybe we had better talk it over in private."

"Dat's what I'm open fer—business," Dirty Dan responded. "An' ye needn't be 'fraid to talk 'fore Dusty Dick, fer him an' me's crony pals; hey, partner? I shu'd smile 'f we ain't!"

"E is right, sir," Dusty Dick promptly assured. "E likes Hi, hand Hi likes 'im; hand we 'ave made hup hour minds that we likes heach hother. Hand so, has Hi was ha going to give hup me berth hany'ow, Hi 'ave hagreed to cast me lot with 'im for ha time."

"You are no Frenchman, that I'll be bound," remarked Mr. Larkins, laughing. "It is nothing to me, though, what you two do. If you can trust your friend, Dan, there is no reason why you shouldn't; and, it may be that you can make use of him. I've got work for you," in lower tone. "Have you ever heard of Broadway Billy, the detective?"

CHAPTER VI.

BILL HODGERS, BOATMAN.

At the mention of that name, Dan Shanley gave a slight start.

"I'd like ter know de feller what ain't heard of him," he growled. "What is dis job you speak about?"

"Before I talk much about it, let me caution you on some points. You know a man over there in New York who is liberal with his money when his friends call on him, I guess."

"I guess so, too."

"Exactly. Well, it must be understood that his name is not to be mentioned in this matter. You know it, and I know it, and that's enough to know it. Two are company, but three are a crowd, in such a case. See?"

"I see clear t'rough dat, Mr. Larkins."

"Enough said, then. You keep to yourself what you know, and that certain man in New York won't forget his friends. He isn't that kind. But, that don't shut you out from taking your friend Brick into this job with you if you want to take him in; that's your business."

"Hi don't want to force myself hin where Hi ham not wanted, sir," spoke up Dusty Dick. "Hi think maybe Hi ad better take ha walk while you 'ave your little talk, don't ye know. This business his not for Hi to know, has Hi can easily see, hand Hi—"

"You stay right where you are, Dusty Dick," ordered Dirty Dan. "Dis is my business, dis is, an' if I take you in it wid me, dat's my business, too. See?"

"Hall right, hif you say so, mate. Hit don't make no difference to Hi hif hit don't to 'e," jerking his thumb at Larkins.

"And it can't make any difference to me," assured Larkins, smiling. "Dan here knows which side of his bread is buttered, and he is pretty fond of butter. You may have to eat yours without butter, Brick, but you won't mind that when you get used to it. Ha, ha, ha!"

The others laughed with him, whether they saw his point or not, and Larkins then came down to business.

"Now, Dan," said he, "this job I have for you is one that won't admit of any trifling on your part. You have got to buckle right down to work. If you are successful, then that mutual friend of ours in New York has five hundred dollars ready to pay over to you. Catch on?"

"I t'ink I do, Cully."

"You ought to, anyhow, for I have made it as plain as words can make it. I know you are no fool. Now, this detective has been prying his nose into the business of this mutual friend of ours, and by so doing he has got his nose pinched a little—maybe more and maybe less; can't tell just how bad he is hurt, for at present he is away on a vacation."

"Serves him right! I'd like to pinch de nose clean off 'n every one of dat sort. See?"

"I'd like to see—see it done, I mean. But, for the case in point: This Broadway Billy has two boys in the business with him, and they are almost as sharp as he is himself. They are on the scent after their boss, as keen as a pair of bloodhounds, and they may stumble up against the party who pulled the nose of their boss if they are not taken care of pretty promptly. You don't need any interpreter to help you grasp that, I guess."

"I see, said de blind man."

"But he didn't see, all the same. We don't want any guess-work about this matter, Dirty Dan. If you don't understand, tell me so, and I'll come out with it Jack Blunt."

"You couldn't talk no plainer if you tried, Cully. You want dem boys taken care of. Ain't dat it?"

"That is just it. They must drop out of the race as it were, and nobody be the wiser. The police may make a great hue and cry, but that won't hurt anybody if the said Anybody is only careful to make a good job of it and leave his trail covered behind him. Now, the question is, do you think Anybody can do the job and not get his fingers burnt doing it?"

"No, I don't t'ink anybody could, Cully; but I know somebody what ain't afraid to tackle de job, an' my name is Somebody. See? Me an' Dusty Dick here kin do dat like a mice."

"I have nothing to do with Dusty Dick; my business is with you. It is only you and I and our mutual friend in it; if you take a partner, that is your part of the business. You have got good sense enough not to give away your own snap, so I have no objection."

"I savvy, Cully. But, have you got any plan laid out?"

"No; I'm going to leave it all to you. But, here is a word of caution for you: If you should make a slip of it, and get sent up, keep your head shut tight and don't give our mutual friend away. That wouldn't help your case any, you know; but, on the other hand, if you keep a still tongue it will mean a boodle for you, on the quiet. You take the risk for the five hundred promised, and you would be a mean cur to give a friend away if you got into trouble, when it would be no fault of his. Don't you think so?"

"Dat ain't Dirty Dan's style, Cully. Don't you worry 'bout dat. See? Dey ain't goin' to slip it up my back, not dis time."

"Well, I hope not, anyhow. But, that is not all. As I told you, Broadway Billy's nose has been tweaked, but we don't know just how bad he's hurt. Nobody can say whether he is on deck or not. If he is

around, in disguise, you are likely to get into trouble unless you play the game with remarkable skill. This I tell you so that you will know just what risk you are running. If I should find out the extent of damage that has been done to his nose, I'll let you know. If it has been pinched off, of course he can never pry into other people's business again."

"Dat is a dead open-an'-shut, Cully. But, dere's one t'ing I would like to know, while we are about it, an' dat is dis: Where was dis feller's nose pinched? an' who done de pinchin'?"

"What's the use of our speaking thus figuratively about it? What I mean, in plain English, is just this: An attempt has been made upon Broadway Billy's life, but whether successful or not, no one knows, yet. Three nights ago he was dropped into the middle of the Hudson."

"Dat's what I wanted to git at; I understand all about pinchin' his nose, an' all dat; dat was beefin'. Was he hit on de head 'fore he was dropped in?"

"No; worse luck. If he had been, there would not be much doubt about his fate, I guess."

"An' dere won't be any doubt about his fate if he gits in de way of Dirty Dan, you kin bet high on dat," declared Shanley, boastfully. "Dat feller will find he ain't in Noo York, if he comes over here an' puts his nose in Googin's Groggery. We'll do him up so quick he won't know what his name was. See?"

"You are talking through your hat, now, Dan. You don't know the fellow, or you would have a wholesome fear of him. If he should turn up, don't be foolish enough to tackle him unless you have a plan well laid out, for you are likely to get the worst of the job if you do. Well, I have told you everything I need tell you, I guess, and I'll be going."

"Don't you worry 'bout us, Cully," sneered Dan, with a boastful jerk of the head. "If me an' Dick can't git away wid dat feller, den we'll go out of de biz. See? Ain't dat so, Dusty Dick?"

"Hi never goes back hon ha pal, Hi never does," the dusty stoker stoutly declared.

And giving his rascally tools the address of Broadway Billy's office, and other points that might be useful to them, Mr. Larkins took his leave of the dive.

The dancing had long ere this been resumed, and the place had by this time become quite crowded. Those who noticed the departure of the shabby coachman, however, called out a cheery good-night to him, reminding him that he must not forget to come again, an invitation which was strongest from the proprietor himself.

"What do ye t'ink of dat feller, Cully?" inquired Dirty Dan of his companion, as soon as Larkins was gone.

"Hi should say 'is Royal Ighness was ha bloomink cove," Dusty Dick offered by way of compliment.

"An' ye say jes' right, if ye mean by dat dat he's a mighty good feller, I'm tellin' ye."

"Hand that his just what Hi do mean. 'E is a bloody prince, 'e is!"

"Well, now, let's talk biz, you an' me: Do ye want ter go into dist'ing wid me, Dick, an' make a stake ter fatten yer pocket?"

"Ay, ay, mate; Hi will go hinto hit with 'e hif 'e wants me to. Hand hit won't be the first job hof the kind Hi 'ave 'ad ha' and hin. Has Hi told 'e, Hi mean to desert ship hany-'ow?"

With that understanding they went ahead, laying the plans for their evil undertaking as far as they could do so then.

Suddenly, while they were talking, Dirty Dan gave a start.

His companion was quick to notice it, and turned to see who or what caused it as Dan whispered:

"Sa-ay, Cully, see dat feller dere?"

"'Im with the blue shirt and the big whiskers, do 'e mean, mate?"

"Dat's him. He ain't no frien' o' mine, dat feller ain't, an' I bet he's lookin' fer me now."

This new-comer into the den was a big, broad-shouldered fellow in rough attire, wearing water boots, canvas breeches and blue shirt. He had on a slouch hat, and a thick beard almost covered his face.

"Ay! His that so?" Dusty Dick exclaimed and questioned. "Tell me, mate, 'oo is 'e?"

"His name is Bill Hodgers, an' he's a boatman on de river w'en he ain't nothin' worse 'n dat. See? Him an' me uther pull stroke, but we don't no more, 'cause we don't. See?"

"Hi see 'e 'as twigg'd 'e now, mate."

"Yes, he's spotted me now, fer sure. I 'pend on you fer help if he piles onto me. See?"

"Hi'm the blowin' bloater what can do that, every time, mate. You won't 'ave to 'oller twice for 'elp when Dusty Dick his haround, Hi'm tellin' 'e."

The burly boatman had strode forward at once upon espying Dirty Dan, and he came up to the table just as Dusty Dick finished speaking, looking first at Dan and then at his companion in an inquiring way.

Then came a surprise for Dirty Dan, for, instead of making trouble, as Dan had expected, Hodgers spoke to him in a most conciliatory manner, offering to let the past be forgotten. And he took a seat at the table, remarking in a lower tone that he had a scheme in mind for making some money.

CHAPTER VII.

HODGERS UNFOLDS HIS SCHEME.

"WELL, what is dis idee ye speak erbout?" inquired Dirty Dan, with marked lack of enthusiasm.

"I'll tell ye what it is, Dan, an' then ye kin see whether there's anything in it er not. I've got a float down at my shanty 'long the river that orter bring us in some scales."

"Den why don't ye go an' git 'em? Seems ter me dere must be a nigger in de fence here, or you wouldn't come to me to give me a share wid ye. If ye expect to git me into de t'ing ye will have to lay it wide open an' let me see de whole insides of it. See?"

"You are wary of me, ain't ye? Well, I don't blame ye, fer ye know I have good cause ter be down on ye hard. But we'll let that drop. The reason I have come ter you is this—this here is a matter that I can't handle alone, and you was the best man I could think of to take into it with me. That's the hull of it, Dan. This float is a prize, if we kin only work it right."

"Well, show it up, an' den I'll tell ye what I'll do wid ye."

"How about your partner here, is he all right?"

"Him? He's as good as gold, Bill. Don't you be 'fraid of him, Cully. If I go in it, so does he, you bet."

"All right. I only wanted to know whether you trusted him or not, that's all. This is a game where too many might be a swampin' load in rough water, ye see."

"Dat's all right. Mebby I see an' mebby I don't; but, I ain't bitin' till I see whether dere is a hook in de bait or not. See? Dey ain't ketchin' jay-birds wid chaff dis season, Bill Hodgers."

"I don't blame ye, as I said, fer bein' wary, Dan; you know I orter have it in fer you, by rights; but, let that drop fer now. Let me give ye ther hull story, an' then you'll see I'm dealin' out a straight hawser fer you to make fast to. This float is a prize!"

"So ye said."

"An' I mean it, too. I found papers on the body, showin' that somebody has been guilty of a dark deed, and it's jest likely

that Somebody was the one that made a float of this feller. Now, if we kin find Mr. Somebody, mebby we kin play him fer a sucker and skin him like ary eel. And that ain't all of it, either: This Mr. Somebody is a frien' o' yours."

Dirty Dan's lack of interest was gone in an instant.

"A frien' of mine!" he exclaimed, his eyes opening wide. "Ain't you beefin', Bill Hodgers?"

The burly boatman could be seen to smile in spite of all his whiskers. He had evidently been holding this statement as his strongest point.

"Nary a beef," he assured. "I'm towin' ye out on a flood tide, Dirty Dan, an' it won't take a clarryvant now ter make ye understand the reason why I have come ter you with the matter."

"Dat's so, Bill. I take it ye have come to me 'cause dis feller ye speak 'bout is a frien' o' mine. Now, who is he? Dat's de question now. I kin mighty soon tell ye whether I know him or not, an' if I don't it ain't no deal. See? What is his name?"

The boatman leaned forward and whispered.

"Great jumpin'!" exclaimed Dirty Dan, with amazement undisguised. "You's got onto me, Bill, after all!"

The burly boatman laid back his head and gave vent to a hearty low guffaw, as though greatly tickled.

"I've got ye on a chop sea now, Dan, spite of yerself," he declared, when he had ceased laughing. "You shut me out before, but now I'm right in it. I know the secret of your little pull, now."

Dirty Dan looked cheap, for the moment.

"Guess I can't git around it, Bill," he owned. "I wouldn't share wid you before, but now I'll have to or let you go it alone. Dat's what you want me ter do wid ye, dough, ain't it—share?"

"Yes; but none of *your* share; we'll make him come down *double*. You kin do the business for both, and you kin make it more'n double, fer interest, if ye want to. These papers makes it a dead sure thing against the feller, and he can't git out of it."

"Have ye got dem papers wid ye, Bill?"

"No; they are at my shanty where the float is. I have got 'em in a safe place, you bet. This float had a dead sure case 'gainst Mr.—"

"Sh! Don't mention no names!"

"That's so; it almost slipped me. Then your frien' here ain't in that with ye, hey?"

"Naw; what ye take me fer? If I wouldn't let *you* in it wid me, do ye t'ink I would take in a stranger? Dat ain't sayin' dat Dick ain't a bully boy, mind ye. He understands how dat is."

"Hi hunderstand, hof course," Dusty Dick assured. "Hi 'ave no right to complain, Hi hassure ye. Hif ha man 'as ha good thing, hit his 'is business to make the most hof hit. Hi ham not hasking to be taken hinto ha man's 'cart hon short acquaintance; not Hi!"

"But, all de same," Dirty Dan hastened to add, "I have tooken Dick in wid me fer a partner, Bill, an' you are jes' de feller we want to help us wid a bit of a job we have got on hand ter do. What d'ye say to it?"

"Cordin' to what it is."

In brief, then, Dan told him about the bargain he had made with Larkins for the disposal of Broadway Billy's boys.

"Ye see, it is dis way," he concluded. "Wid dat boat of yours we could git 'em over de river widout much trouble, once we git holt of 'em, and land 'em in a good safe place."

"Hi happrove hof that plan, with hall me 'eart," chipped in Dusty Dick.

"What's my share of the scales ter be?" inquired the boatman. "How much are ye gettin' fer the job?"

"I'm gettin' a hundred fer it," answered

Dan, at the same time giving Dusty Dick a touch with his foot under the table. "I've promised Dick here twenty, and I'll give you de same."

"Make it twenty-five, an' I'll help ye with the job."

"Well, I'll do dat, Bill, seein' it's you. You an' me must pull together now if we ever did."

"Yes, or pull apart, one or the other. I have jes' as good a holt as you have, now, Dan, an' it won't be well fer you to play me any more dirty tricks, if I find ye out."

"Dat's so. But, don't cross de bridge till ye come to it. S'pose we go an' see dat floater ye tell about."

"All right, if ye want to."

"And de papers, too. I want a look at dem while we are about it."

"Yes, of course; I'm willin' ter let ye see that I am givin' you a full sail in the matter. Come on."

"And 'ow habout Hi!" spoke up the dusty stoker.

"You are in it wid me," assured Dirty Dan. "Come along with ye."

With that the three rose and made their way out of the den, with its sickly lights, its smoke-murky air, and worse; and when they reached the sidewalk the fog-foul air without was like an ambrosial draught in contrast.

"My heyes!" exclaimed Dusty Dick, "but that was ha 'ard 'ole!"

At which Dirty Dan and the burly boatman laughed, asking him if Liverpool could show anything to surpass it.

They made their way through a number of miserable lanes and alleys—so to call them, with many a crook and turn, and at last Bill Hodgers opened the door of a shanty upon which they had come abruptly.

It was right close to the water, under the frowning brow of a towering coal chute.

The place was dark within, and the boatman bade them stand still till he had made a light, which they were willing enough to do.

Presently a light was had, furnished by a broken ship lantern, and the visitors could take in their surroundings. They were certainly in a miserable place, suitable for any crime of darkest kind.

The washing of the water around and against the piles underneath could be plainly heard, and the thumping of a boat, the sounds coming up unhindered through an open trap-door at one side of the room, which Hodgers closed down as soon as he had hung up the lantern.

On the opposite side of the room from this trap-door lay a suggestive something covered with a piece of old sail.

"Is dis de float?" inquired Dirty Dan, stepping forward and touching it with his foot.

"Yes, that's him," answered the boatman. "Pull off the coverin'."

This Dan did, rudely enough, and a ghastly thing was revealed—the disfigured body of a drowned man.

"Did ye find what his name was?" Dan made inquiry.

"Yes; it was on the papers and letters he had in his pockets. His name was Richard Redwood."

"Dat's a name good enough fer a'most anybody; don't you say so, Dusty Dick? But, de papers; *dem's* what counts, Cully. Where's *dem*?"

He jerked the covering over the corpse as rudely as he had snatched it off and turned away. Such a sight, quite evidently, was nothing new to him, since he and Hodgers had once been partners.

Hodgers overturned a bunk on yet another side of the little place, and drew forth a packet of papers.

From these he took out some, putting the others back again.

"I ain't lettin' these go into your hands,

Dirty Dan," he said, as he unfolded them. "You might play me a trick, or try to, though I'm big enough to pitch ye into the river if ye tried it on."

"Dat's all right," Dan was obliged to agree. "You kin read 'em out to me, an' dat will be jes' de same. You needn't be' fraid of my 'stroyin' dem papers, fer I t'ink dey must be vallyble dockyments. Dey is sure black an' white proof 'gainst dat fellow, I take it."

"That's what they are, sure enough. You never had that kind o' proof, as I git at it, though you was a witness to a deed o' dark work. Now, havin' these papers, we have a dead sure thing against that man; but, I'll take keer of the papers m'self, and then I will be sure of my part of the profits. Pay tention, now, while I read 'em to ye."

With that he began to read, in his poor way, but omitting names. The papers referred to a certain crime, a murder, for which an innocent man was in prison for life while the guilty person was at large. And, there was nearly all the proof necessary for the release of the one and the conviction of the other.

These rascals evidently had a big thing in their hands, and they spent a considerable time in talking about the matter before they finally parted for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

HARRY AND SETH IN GLOOM.

"CHRISTOPHER COLUMBIA! This is sapping the marrow right out of my bones, Seth, and that's the fact."

"It is a terrible strain on the mind, I must admit, Harry," Silent Seth made response. "But, what can we do? If we can't strike the trait we can't, and that's all there is about it."

"Crackers an' cheese! We have struck the trail, Seth, but it has run into the ground and we can't follow it."

"Or into the water."

"Yes, or into the water, that's so. We can follow the boss down to the ferry, and that is the last of him. Not a sign of him or the trail to be seen after that; and here we are, as helpless as babes in the woods, sucking our thumbs and doing nothing."

"I don't know how much longer you can stand it, Harry, but it is killing me out and out."

"I can't stand it another minute!" Harry cried, leaping to his feet. "You have been bearin' up so well that I was puttin' on the breaks hard to keep up my end with ye."

"Yes, I have been trying to keep a stiff upper lip, Harry, and you know I am not a fellow to say much about my feelings; but now I tell you honestly I feel more like having a good cry than anything else, and I'm not ashamed to say it, either. It breaks me all up."

"Fall on my neck, then, and we'll mingle our tears together," cried Harry, opening his arms invitingly. "But don't you think we're rather too big to cry?"

"Not if the worst has happened to Broadway Billy, I don't."

"You are right. Here it is four days now, and not a word from him, and the trail as dark and cold as it was at the beginning. Come, Seth, let's go and see the superintendent and see if he has heard anything."

"I'm with you, for it's killing to stay here."

They left the office with haste, their eyes half dimmed by welling tears, and set forth upon their errand.

"Well, I see you are in despair," they were greeted when they entered the office of the great thief-taker. "I read it in your faces that you have discovered nothing new."

"Not a thing, sir," admitted Harry; "and we have come here hoping that maybe you have heard something."

"We are all in the dark yet," was the unwelcome word.

Broadway Billy Among Jersey Thugs.

Harry dropped upon a chair, as if he meant to give up entirely to despair. It was indeed hard for him and Seth to bear.

"I did think we were some good at detective work, Seth and me," Harry bitterly complained, "but I find we ain't. Can't you take a soft club, boss, and beat out my brains?"

"Don't condemn yourself, my lad," the superintendent chided. "One of my best men is on the case, and he is making but little better progress than you. He has made one slight discovery."

"Ha! that's better'n nothin' at all! What is it?"

"Well, he made inquiry what boats left the ferry on the Jersey side at that hour on that night, and has been interviewing all the employees who were on duty at that time."

"Oh! Oh!" groaned Harry. "Seth, let's go hunt up a quiet corner and die."

"What's the matter now, lad?"

"To think we didn't think of that! Say, don't know where a fellow can buy a pint of brains, do ye?"

"Stop your fooling, Harry," chided Seth, "and let's hear what this one slight discovery is. It is no time now for you to be shaking that rattlebox of yours, if you only knew it."

"Well, the discovery is this," the superintendent went on: "On the rear lower deck of the boat that left the ferry on the Jersey side at that particular hour on that particular night for Cortlandt street, was found a slight pool of blood next morning."

"That settles it," moaned Harry. "Seth let's cry."

Seth, however, was as stocial as ever in his life, and without any showing of any emotion whatever.

"What do you make of that, sir?" he inquired.

"Well, it looks significant, but it may mean nothing at all," was the reply. "No one knows when or how it came there. The closest inquiry of the employees on that boat has failed to discover anything further. There was no fight on the boat so far as they know."

"That leaves us just where we were, then," said Harry.

"Yes, that is true, my lad, the case is about where it was, except that we are giving some attention now to the blood clue, taking that as a sign that a crime of some sort was done. It is not impossible that some one may have been knocked on the head and thrown overboard. We are watching the hospitals and morgue, and something may come to light."

"I hope our boss won't come to light that way," Seth said earnestly. "But, I fear the worst."

"And so do I," agreed Harry. "Something has happened, or he would never be silent so long as this. But, what can we do, sir?"

"You can do nothing, except to be on the watch for every sign that appears," the superintendent made answer. "Keep your eyes and ears well open, and let nothing escape you."

"And you will let us know of anything that turns up?"

"You already have my promise for that, my lads."

"How about the other case?" inquired Seth. "Has anything been heard about the missing Mr. Redwood?"

"Not a thing, as yet. And, by the way, this blood clew is just as much in that case as it is in this of your employer. If they crossed the ferry as soon as they reached it, they must have been both on the same boat."

"Unless they took different boats, sir."

"What I was just going to add; unless they crossed to different streets here in New York."

"And there's no way of knowing whether

they did or didn't, though the boss always took the down-town boat. Can't tell which boat the other fellow took, and no way of finding out, I s'pose."

"No; we cannot be sure on that point. Well, since we can do nothing we must wait with what patience we can for something to come to light."

A few further remarks, and the boys came away, little wiser than when they had entered.

"What is going to be done?" demanded Harry, urgently.

"I think it might pay us to go out there to Lynwood and see that Miss Rollson and question her."

"What good would that do?"

"Well, Redwood was engaged to her, you know, and she ought to know as much about him as anybody. She would know whether he had an enemy or not, and she might say something that would put us right on the track."

"We'll go, but I don't believe it will be of much use. I'll bet the police detective has been there already on that lay, since we put the super onto it. But, I am with you, Seth; we can't sit still and do nothing, for that would kill me in a short time."

That move decided upon, they quickened their pace to the office, thinking it better to return there before starting.

Arriving, they were agreeably surprised to find Miss Rollson at the office door, as on the occasion of her first visit. She had arrived a moment ahead of them.

The boys greeted her, and let her into the office.

"Tell me," she urged eagerly, "have you been able to learn anything about Mr. Redwood?"

"Not a thing," answered Harry. "Mr. Weston has not turned up yet either, so we have not been able to do much. We are now greatly worried about him, and were on the point of going out to see you this hour."

"To see me? What did you want?"

They told her about the finding of the blood on the ferryboat, and Harry added:

"So, we wanted to ask if Redwood had any enemy that you know of. Somebody, maybe, has laid him out there and dropped him into the river on the quiet."

"Merciful goodness!" the young woman cried. "I hope that has not happened! But, since you mention it, and since he has so entirely disappeared, it may be so. I must know the truth, however terrible!"

"And that is what we are anxious to know, too," declared Seth. "If we could learn the fate of Mr. Redwood it might give us the clue to the fate of Mr. Weston at the same time. It is pretty certain that they crossed from Jersey City on the same boat on that fatal night."

"You didn't answer the question, miss," reminded Happy Harry.

"The question?"

"As to whether Redwood had any enemy, far as you know. You said maybe it might be so, that somebody had done for him."

"Yes, so I did say, and it is something that has been on my mind, too. I came here to tell Mr. Weston about that, did I find him in the office. As you have made mention of it I will tell you."

"Do it, by all means. If there is anything that will give us the clue, that is what we want most of anything in the world just now. Fire away—excuse my slang; I can't help it."

"I must tell you something of a family disgrace first, however. I have a brother who is in the New Jersey State Prison for life for a murder which he never committed, and—"

"Yes, we heard something about that—"

"You have heard? Where?"

"It was mentioned at the office where Mr. Redwood was employed, that was all. But

don't stop; go on and tell us what you have to tell."

"There is not much to tell, but it may be important. And, since Mr. Weston has not returned, I do not know but I ought to take the case to another detective, or to the chief of police—"

"Christopher Columbia!" cried Harry. "Don't do that, miss! Don't snatch away the very thing that may give a clue to the whole business! Besides, the superintendent is helping us now with all his might, and any clue you can give us will drop right into his lap."

"Oh, if that is the case I will trust you, of course. Mr. Redwood had been for some time at work trying to establish the innocence of my brother, and when he was with me the other evening he told me he believed he had at last succeeded in bringing the crime home to the guilty man. He would tell me no more than that, as he thought it best to keep the matter very quiet until there could be no mistake about it. May it not be just possible that he has been put out of the way for that?"

CHAPTER IX.

PECULIAR FEATURES.

"CHRISTOPHER COLUMBIA chewin' crackers an' cheese!"

With that exclamation Happy Harry leaped up and executed a wild figure in the middle of the room, in spite of the fact that a lady client was present.

"Excuse me, miss," he then made apology, "but I could not help it. This is getting hot for a fact, now, and I'll bet this story you have told is the real bottom of the whole business."

"I am afraid it is—"

"Afraid it is! I hope to goodness there's no mistake about it, for it will give the superintendent something to build on!"

"Yes; but, it may be that poor Mr. Redwood has been killed, for a murderer would not be likely to stop at a second crime to cover the first. Oh! I hope the matter may speedily be cleared."

"You mustn't lose sight of the fact that it will be bad for Redwood if he is found alive, almost as bad as it would for you be if he is found dead. They will make a prisoner of him at sight for that robbery business, you know, and he may have to go up for it."

"That does not trouble me. I know he is innocent of that—as innocent as I am myself."

"Say, will you come with us to Headquarters, miss?"

"If you think I ought to."

"And we do; hey, Seth?"

"Good idea," Seth promptly agreed.

"Let us go, then, without delay," the young lady urged.

When they entered the office of the superintendent Harry introduced the lady promptly.

"We have got something to work on, now, boss," he hastily added. "This lady's brother is in prison for life for murder, but says he is innocent of the deed. Redwood had been playing detective for him, and had just got the crime fastened on the right man—"

"Who was that man?" the superintendent interrupted.

"Alas! he did not tell me," the young woman answered, the question having been put to her.

She told the matter simply but fully, the superintendent paying close attention from first to last. It could be seen that he was interested in the story.

"You hold, then," he observed, "that Redwood is innocent of the theft of which he stands accused?"

"Most assuredly I do, sir. I know Dick Redwood; he was the soul of honor, sir."

"The greatest rascals are the most honorable, till found out."

"May I put a question to you, sir?"

"Certainly."

"If Dick Redwood did steal twenty thousand dollars, as they say, what did he do with it?"

"Well, I can hardly be expected to know that, miss."

"Nor could any one answer it, sir. Let me tell you something: Mr. Redwood and I would have been married last year, but he lacked the means to complete a house he had begun building. That house stood still some months while he was negotiating a loan with which to complete it. Almost every cent of his salary has been going into that house for a long time."

"Ha! this gives the matter a different look."

"More than that, sir, he has been living as cheaply as possible; has hardly kept himself in respectable dress; has limited himself to one cigar a day, though he is exceedingly fond of smoking; in short, has practiced economy in a hundred little ways. Why would he do this, if he had been stealing to the wonderful extent of twenty thousand dollars? Why, sir, that would build half a dozen houses like the modest one he was striving to finish so that we might make it our home early next year. Dick Redwood a thief? Never!"

She spoke with an earnestness and force that carried conviction with her words.

"If that was the situation, miss," said the superintendent, "this matter is much deeper than we first thought it to be. I will look into it from a new standpoint and see what can be learned."

"Seems to me the jeeb is going to jeeb, now," cried Happy Harry. "What do you think, boss?"

"Something may come of this," the great chief agreed.

Just then a man entered with a respectful salute, and waited for his superior to question.

"What is it?" the superintendent asked.

"A body has been brought to the Morgue, sir, recognized by letters in the pockets as that of—"

"Stop!" the superintendent ordered. "Write the name on a card, hand it to me, and retire. It may be one I would not wish to have mentioned aloud just at this time."

He glanced at Miss Rollson as he said this, and saw her face was deathly white.

It was his way of preparing her for what might prove shocking news, for he had guessed the name his man had been about to speak.

The man obeyed the directions quickly, and handing a card to his chief, made his exit.

The superintendent glanced at the name.

"Miss Rollson, he spoke, in a saddened tone, "here is bad news for you, as it is useless for me to try to conceal. The body of Richard Redwood has been recovered from the river."

The young woman buried her face in her hands, and for a few moments silently wept.

"I guessed the terrible truth, sir, the moment you forbade the man speaking the name aloud," she presently said as calmly as possible. "Murder has been done, I am sure of it, and it is for you to hunt down the guilty wretch and see that he is brought to punishment!"

"That I will do, miss, if man can do it," the chief promised. "Make no mention of what you have told me, for it were better that it be not known that I have the information in my possession. Go home, and we will do everything in our power to solve the whole problem and bring the guilty ones to the reward they merit. This is a sad blow, but, bear up."

"I must go at once to the Morgue and see this body for myself," the young woman declared. "Can you send some one to guide me there, sir?"

"We're the cherubs can do that, for we're

going right there ourselves," here spoke up Happy Harry.

"What are you going there for?" demanded the superintendent.

"To see if it really is Redwood, sir. We have a photo of him, you know, and we can soon settle that question; though I don't suppose there's any doubt about it's bein' him."

"Scarcely any doubt, I think; still, it will be better to go and identify the body, and be sure on that point to start with. It is something that must be done anyhow. Go, by all means, miss; and, you may freely trust yourself to the guidance and protection of these young gentlemen."

When they came to the Morgue, Happy Harry acted as spokesman, the part that fell to him naturally, and their business was promptly made known.

Learning which body was the one they sought, they went to it promptly, and at sight Miss Rollson uttered an exclamation.

"It is not he!" she cried, almost joyfully. "But, immediately adding in a saddened tone, "we have probably come to the wrong one. This certainly is *not* Dick Redwood."

"This is the one that's meant, though, there's no doubt about that part of it," assured Happy Harry. "There's getting to be a double mess of mix in this case, sure's you are born. I'm going to pump for information a little around here, and see what I can find out."

The result of his "pumping" was not over-gratifying.

It appeared that the body had been discovered in the river that morning by a boatman, who had pulled it to the nearest dock and turned it over to a policeman to be taken charge of. This was the body said to be that of Richard Redwood, of that no doubt could be entertained. And the clothes, when seen, were positively identified by Miss Rollson as those her lover had worn on the night when she last saw him.

They talked the matter over when they came away from the dread place, but could make little or nothing out of it all.

When they parted Miss Rollson set out for home, while the "team" bent their steps again toward Headquarters.

"I see you are puzzled over something," the superintendent greeted them at sight. "What is it this time, my lads?"

The facts were laid before him.

"This is a curious case, boys," he remarked thoughtfully. "If this is not the body of Richard Redwood, how came Redwood's clothes upon it? That is something to test your skill as detectives; take hold and unravel the mystery."

"Guess it's too big for our craft, sir," answered Harry. "This is a bigger lump than we can chew. If the boss was only on deck, you bet he would shake up the dry bones in a hurry; but as it is we are lame, unless Seth here will put on the boss's boots."

"Well, I am not prepared to talk with you about it just now. I am busy, but I will give it thought, and maybe by the time you drop in again I will have something laid out for you to do. This, however, I will say: it looks now as though Broadway Billy may have had a hand in the matter, and it would not surprise me any if he should turn up unexpectedly."

"Either that, sir, or they have downed him for good," ventured Silent Seth.

"Yes, it is one or the other, I feel sure. It is certain, I think, that the blood found on the ferryboat is a part of this case, and that being so, I fancy a dark deed done there in which Broadway Billy figured, somehow."

The boys took leave, returning to the office.

They had much to occupy their minds now, and their gloomy thoughts had given way to hope, to a certain extent.

Harry's tongue wagged almost incessantly, and by the time the office was reached he

had gone over every part of the case, with speculations upon every feature of it.

One thing he could not decide, however, and that was what he and Seth ought to do in the matter. Both were eager to be up and doing, but the case was a puzzling one and they hardly knew which way to turn. There was little they could do, it seemed.

The near future was destined to be exciting enough to satisfy their most unreasonable demands.

CHAPTER X.

SOME NEW SUGGESTIONS.

One of the most charming little villages in New Jersey is Lynwood, and one of the most homelike little cottages there was the home of the Rollsons.

The family consisted of only mother and two daughters, of which latter Star was the elder. Her sister was a young miss of seventeen, named Gertrude. Mr. Rollson was dead.

The family lived a very retired life, the burden of shame being upon them, although they had many friends who believed Henry Rollson innocent of the crime for which he had been imprisoned for life. Still, they felt keenly their disgrace, and shunned society.

On the night of the day of which the preceding chapter treated, the evening train out from the city brought this family a visitor.

He was admitted into the house by Mrs. Rollson, who greeted him cordially, in her sad way.

"I am happy to see you, Mr. Breaumont," were her words.

"The pleasure is mutual," responded the polished merchant, "though I have come on a sad errand, Mrs. Rollson."

"A sad errand? Why, what—"

"Is your daughter at home—Miss Rollson?"

"Yes, yes; but tell me, Mr. Breaumont, what is it?"

"Well, Mrs. Rollson, Dick Redwood has been found at last, and—"

"Dick found!" exclaimed another voice, and Star Rollson appeared on the scene. "But, ma," adding quickly, "do not keep Mr. Breaumont in the hall: let us go to the sitting-room."

She led the way at once, and as soon as all were seated, asked eagerly:

"Where is Dick, Mr. Breaumont? Where was he found? And, has his good name been cleared of that terrible charge—"

"Alas! I bring you news the worst, Miss Rollson," the caller interrupted. "When I said Dick has been found, I meant his body. I saw mention of it in the evening paper, and thought it my duty—"

Seeing the girl's face suddenly lighten, he paused in astonishment.

"Do you mean the body found in the river this morning, Mr. Breaumont?" she inquired.

"Yes; it is at the Morgue, and is undoubtedly Dick's. Letters bearing his name were in the pockets. I did not go there, as it was late, but came right here."

"It is not Dick's body, sir."

"Not his?"

"No."

"How do you know this?"

"I have been to the Morgue and seen it. I knew it this morning; heard about it while I was in town."

"Why, you more than astonish me, Miss Rollson. I had not the slightest suspicion that it could not be he. Are you quite sure you made no mistake, being naturally under excitement?"

Star smiled.

"I was not there on an errand that admitted of my coming away in doubt, Mr. Breaumont," she answered. "The body was not that of Dick Redwood."

"Then how can we explain the letters found in the pockets? The idea came to me

as I read of it in the paper that the poor fellow had committed suicide in order to escape his shame—”

“Sir! you insult his memory—you insult me! Dick Redwood was *no* thief, I am sure of that!”

“I wish it could be shown that he was not—”

“Stop! I cannot listen to another word, sir, that casts reflection upon his good name.”

“I am sorry, I will say no more, if possible; but, I speak nothing of suspicions, but from the terrible *facts* that have been discovered. About the letters in the pockets—”

“Useless to ask me how they came there, sir; it is easily explained: The clothes were those Dick had on when I last saw him alive.”

“Amazing!”

“The fact nevertheless.”

“Then where can Dick be? But, I suspect—”

“What do you suspect?”

“It is forbidden. I dare not mention the suspicion. In fact, it is unworthy of me as well as of him. Better that I do not speak it.”

“Yes, name it. I give you leave to do so.”

“Well, let us look at the matter for the moment as concerning some one else than Dick Redwood. Let us look at it as concerning a stranger.”

“Very well.”

“That gives me more liberty to speak. This man, this stranger, has been robbing his employers till he has stolen a sum amounting to about twenty thousand dollars. He has been extremely careful and systematic, and till now has never been suspected.”

“Go on, please.”

The girl had her eyes cast to the floor, and her face was flushed.

Her mother, as well as the younger sister, who had now entered, were looking at her, anxiously, it seemed.

“Well, he had found that discovery was coming. What would he do, what could he do, to escape the consequences? Supposing him guilty, we must suppose that he was saving his stolen gain with some fixed object in view. We do not find that he has been spending it—”

“No, you are right, there.”

“He has been artful, let us conclude. Having now enough for his purpose, he is ready to take himself away. But, how best to cover his tracks? Why, suicide is his very plan—not suicide *de facto*, but pretending. If he could put his clothes on the body of some dead person, with a few unimportant papers in the pockets, and have it found in the river eventually, would not that—”

“Stop! stop!” the girl ordered, almost fiercely. “You shall not go a step further, sir! Dick Redwood was no fool.”

“We are speaking about a supposed person, now, Miss Rollson.”

“He was no fool, I say. Even giving him credit for all this baseness, you cannot do away with the fact that he had a level head. Dick's hands were small, soft and white; the hands of this man who was found were those of a hard laborer. Then, the face, although disfigured, was that of a coarse man. Would any one with sound sense think he could play such a deception as that?”

“The body was found too soon for his purpose.”

“You have come here to force insult upon us, sir, and I shall refuse to listen to another word from you.”

“Star!” spoke the mother, chiding gently.

“Star!”

“I say it is so!” the girl insisted.

“Why does he come to me, who am almost crazed with my grief, and force such in-

sinuations upon me? I cannot—I will not stand it longer!”

“You wrong me, you wrong me,” said the man humbly. “I came here with only the best wishes toward you all, believing I was the bearer of sad news. Instead of bringing news, I have here received news the most astonishing. It almost surpasses belief.”

“But, you are so bitter against poor Dick,” complained Star.

“I speak only as the world speaks about him,” was the rejoinder. “It has given me more pain than you believe, his sudden disgrace.”

“Do you mean that?”

“God knows I do, Star—Miss Rollson!”

“Is there no way of clearing his name, Mr. Breaumont?”

“I have made every excuse possible, tried every plan possible, to throw the matter elsewhere, but it comes back to him with more force than ever.”

“How in the world could such an amount be taken, and not found out till now? That is one thing I am unable to understand.”

“It has been the most artful piece of work you ever saw. Why, my own name has been forged to papers time and time again. I hate to tell you this, but you are pressing me.”

“And you never knew that till now?”

“No; they were such papers as went immediately to other departments, and I did not see them.”

“And Dick was the last person to handle them?”

“The very last. For instance, an order would be made, he would cash it, and away it would go to be audited and filed, while the money—”

“Was paid to somebody, you can be sure of it,” cried the young woman.

“Nothing shows for such a payment, however.”

“Well, well, I am no man of business, Mr. Breaumont, but I am a woman of faith—faith in Dick Redwood! The truth of this matter will come to light some time, I know it will.”

“The sooner the better. If Dick is innocent, and it can be shown, no man will be more glad than I. If he is guilty, then the sooner you know him for what he is, the better on that hand. If guilty, the wretch ought to be hanged for deceiving you as he has.”

“He has *not* deceived me, sir! I will believe him true, though the whole world stand arrayed against him!”

“Nobly spoken. Let us have the truth, by all means.”

“By all means, yes. But, have *you* done anything toward establishing the truth?” the young woman inquired.

“We have employed the police to look for Redwood, as the first step. His presence and explanations are necessary, before anything else can be done. He must be found.”

“I hope he will not be found till his innocence is proven.”

“Every hour of his absence only adds to the weight of appearances against him in the matter.”

Mr. Breaumont spent about an hour with the family, taking the next train into the city.

“I am sure Mr. Breaumont's intention was of the best in coming here, Star,” said Mrs. Rollson, when he had taken his leave.

“I certainly hope it was, mamma,” was the listless response.

“And I fear you pained him by your cutting words. I had much rather you would keep at least his respect, my child. Remember his position, and also that once he asked—”

“Do not remind me, I beg, mamma.”

“Yes, I will, too. He once asked your hand in marriage, and now, his coming here, in your time of need, as it were, shows how warm his heart still is toward you. There,

there, I am done: I will not say another word about it; but, I do think you treated him a little too harshly, when his intentions were so good. And you know it is just possible that Dick—”

The girl would hear no more, and ran out of the room, sobbing aloud.

CHAPTER XI.

STEEL COUNTERS STEEL.

THE interests of our romance take us again into Googin's Groggery.

We find nothing new to describe, the place no better, nor yet any worse—there was little room for change in that direction.

There are but two kinds, as such dens of iniquity go, the bad and the very bad. This dive of Googin's was of the latter sort. Had there been a still worse class it would have ranked with that.

At one of the tables, dimly seen through the smoke as one entered the door, were three personages whose acquaintance we have made.

These three were Dirty Dan Shanley, Dusty Dick Brick, and Bill Hodgers.

“So ye worked it all right, did ye, Bill?” we find Dirty Dan saying, as they talked over their grog.

“You bet! I towed it over to the other side, and there made it fast to the dock and told somebody to tell a cop.”

“Dat was right. An'den you rowed away again.”

“That was what I done, Dan.”

“An' dat was right, too. No need ter git mixed up in de t'ing. I bought a evenin' paper to see if it was in it.”

“Was it?”

“Yes; de body of Richard Redwood, de missin' cashier from de firm of What-do-ye-call-em's, foun' in de river; maybe a case of suercide; an' a lot more like dat; made up fer to read nice, ye know.”

“It might be a chance to work a double hitch onto him, mightn't it?” Hodgers suggested.

“How is dat?” Shanley inquired.

“Why, if we make him think we know somethin' about who killed the man, don't ye see, it will give us a double holt onto him; that is, if he done the deed himself it will.”

“Dat's jes' de question,” objected Dan. “I have been t'inkin' of dat, too, but ye see we don't know it, not fer *sure* we don't, an' it ain't likely he's goin' to tell us. We'll have to go slow wid de matter, partner, till we see where we're at. See?”

“Might tell him the feller was alive when I picked him up, and that he made a 'fession to us about the whole business.”

“Den he would want to know what it was.”

“Guess we're stuck, Dan.”

“Dat's what I guess, on dat p'int; but, he can't go back on dem papers what you've got, an' dat's where we'll hold him.”

“Seems like yer frien' Larkins is a good while gettin' here, don't it? If he don't come soon, an' we keep on drinkin', we won't be fit to 'tend to business when he does show up.”

“Guess Dusty Dick won't git drunk on his.”

Dusty Dick had been sticking to his “ot beef, for the good of 'is 'eart.”

“But, Hi ham full has Hi want to be hof hit, now,” the dusty stoker declared positively. “‘Ot beef his good, but too much hof ha good thing, don't ye know, his likely to hoffend the hinner man hand cause him to wommick.”

They talked on, and not idly altogether, for they laid their plans for dealing with Mr. Larkins when he came.

Finally that worthy made his appearance.

His coming was announced by a shout from those nearest the door, and he had to stand his usual treat before he could ad-

vance to where his friends were awaiting him.

"Well, we thought ye wasn't never comin', Cully," greeted Dirty Dan. "Better late 'n never, dough, dey say."

"Yes, better late than never, unless you are going to be hanged, and then it is better never. But, I came as early as I could, boys. What is in the wind now, Dirty Dan?"

"My frien' Bill here has made a diskivery, dat's what, an' he is bound ter come in fer a share."

"What do you mean?"

"Heard about a body dat was foun' in de river?"

"A good many bodies are found in the river. I don't bother my head with such matters."

"Yes, but dis one is one dat has ter do wid dat mutual frien' of oun. We don't have dat secret all to ourselves any more. See?"

"What do you mean?"

"Won't understand, hey? Den I'll have to talk Jack Blunt at ye, dat's all. I won't mention no names, dough, fer Dusty Dick here ain't in it wid me an' Bill, not in full, dat is."

"You talk in riddles."

"Dey won't be riddles when I'm done, dough, you bet. See? Bill, here, found' a float in de river, an' in de pockets was papers what proved dat mutual frien' of ours ought be where Hen Rollson is, or a little furder. Guess you begin to git on now."

"The deuce!"

"De whole lay-out, Cully. Billy comes in fer a share of de fat, or he shows up dem papers. See?"

The man, Larkins, with one fist tight clinched on the table before him, was apparently thinking hard. This news seemed to be something he did not like.

"Were any names on these papers?" he asked.

"Dat's de worst of it," answered Dan. "De names is right out in full."

"And you know who the person is, then, do you?" to Bill. "This makes a bad mess of it all."

"Should ruther say I do," Bill answered with a grin.

"Well, I can tell you one thing: That man may be willing to pay a price for these papers, but he will never pay a cent and let you keep them."

"Dat's another bad p'int in it," said Dan. "Bill won't give 'em up at no price, but means ter hold 'em ter draw interest. See? An', seein' dat I have got to share wid Bill, I'm wid him in it. See? See?"

"What! you going back on your friend?"

"Nary. But, I have a tighter holt than I had afore, an' I'm goin' to stick to Bill an' keep it. You kin tell our frien' dat."

"He won't agree to it, never! He will demand the papers, and it will go hard with both of you if you do not give them up. Do you understand that? You had better be sensible."

"That is what we mean to be," put in Hodgers.

"And you won't give them up?"

"Not even to Dan."

"Well, I have a piece of news for you that maybe you don't know, my fine fellows."

"What is dat?" inquired Dan.

"This body that was found is not that of the man it was supposed to be, by the letters in the pockets."

"Dat so?"

"Exactly. It was thought to be the body of that absconder, Redwood, but it isn't at all. With Redwood alive, what good are the papers to you? Our friend might laugh at you, and you would not dare to show the papers in court. Ha! a thought: You might be held to answer for Redwood's disappearance!"

"T'under!"

Dirty Dan was staggered, and looked at Hodgers in dismay.

"I hadn't thought of that," gasped Bill. "That's somethin' we wasn't countin' on, Dan."

"You's right it is," Dan agreed.

"Might Hi be hallowed to put hin me lip?" asked Dusty Dick.

"Deed ye might," answered Dan, promptly. "What are we goin' ter do in dis fix?"

"Hi would say, then, to make ha bargain for the return hof the papers, for ha snug ha'penny. 'E can see the hother man, hand harrange it, ye know."

"I don't believe he'll come down a cent," cried Larkins.

"Ho, yes, 'e will, rather than 'ave 'is name get hin the papers hin connection with ha scandal, ye know."

"Well, I might tell him, and see what he will do. Can I see you here to-morrow night?"

"Don't know of no reason why ye can't, Cully," answered Dan. "You don't want to try no games with us, dough, or you might get de worst of it. See?"

"You needn't be afraid of my doing that, Dirty Dan; but, you don't want to get your minds set too high on a boddle out of our friend, for I don't believe he will give it. However, I'll see."

"If he don't, we show de papers. See?"

"No, I don't see, for you dare not do it. Do you see?"

"We kin send 'em by mail to somebody, then, anyhow," said Hodgers.

"Well, hold fast to them, at any rate, till I have seen the boss and can meet you again," Larkins advised. "By the way, have you got hold of those two boys yet?"

"Yes, we'll do dat," assured Dan. "No," answering the question, "we ain't got de kids yet, but we's goin' for 'em to-night. Don't you worry but what we'll git 'em, too."

"All right, I will have—"

"Say not'in' 'bout de money," Dan hastily interrupted, fearful lest the man was about to mention the amount in the presence of Hodgers. "We'll look fer dat when de work is done."

"By the way, do you know what I have thought?"

"What's dat?"

"It would be a good plan to put stones to the necks of those two rats and drop them in the river under cover of night."

"Dat so? Well, we'll t'ink about dat part of it as we go along. See? An' we'll let you know when we see you again. See? Don't forgit, now, to-morrer night, here, 'tween nine an' twelve."

"I'll be here. And, as I don't want to delay you a moment longer, I'll go now and let you get at your work."

With a very few more words he took his departure from the den.

"He got us hard, Bill," complained Dan, when he had gone. "But, he'll have to come down if his boss wants dem papers, you bet."

"I ruther think he will, seein' that I hold 'em," agreed Hodgers.

"Hand, see 'ere," Dusty Dick called attention: "Don't let 'im play that sly trick hon you, heither. Hif you take 'is hadvice, hand kill those boys 'e will 'ave ropes haround the necks hof hall hof hus, don't 'e see."

"Don't take us fer clams," said Dan, though his amazed look showed that the thought had not come to him before. "When he gits us on a ketch like dat, Cully, he will be older'n what he is to-day, an' don't you forget it. We are up to snuff, Bill an' me is, every time. But, now to business!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE TEAM IN THE TOILS.

HAPPY HARRY and Silent Seth had been out late, following a clue which they had

hoped would lead to something concerning their missing chief.

They were at home at last, and were talking with Broadway Billy's mother and her husband regarding the matter, late as the hour was. These were trying days and nights, for that household.

While they were discussing the matter, there came a ring at the street bell.

"Who can it be?" questioned Mrs. Watts.

"Easy to find out," said Harry, and stepping to the tube he inquired.

"Christopher Columbia!" he exclaimed joyfully, after a moment's listening. "It's news from the boss at last!"

"Who brings it?" asked Seth.

"Give it up, but we'll soon find out all about it."

And with his words Harry opened the street door, taking it all upon himself to do as he pleased.

"We want to be wary," cautioned Seth. "In our line of business we have to be suspicious of everything. Look out for the fellow, and size up his story well."

Quite a speech for Seth, but he had something to say.

"That's all right, Seth," said Harry. "He will have to get up early to get ahead of us, and don't you doubt it."

The man was by this time near at hand, and Harry opened the room door.

"A dirty-looking fellow," whispered Mrs. Watts, at sight of him. "Look out sharp for him, Seth."

Seth nodded, and the fellow came into the room, bowing awkwardly, with his cap in hand, turning it nervously with his fingers.

"Well, sir, what is the word you bring?" demanded Happy Harry, promptly.

"I ain't makin' no mistake, am I?" the man asked. "Dis is Broadway Billy's place, ain't it? 'Cause why, he told me to be sure on dat p'int."

The fellow was Dirty Dan Shanley.

"Yes, this is the place," assured Harry. "Where do you come from?"

"From over to Weehawken, where Broadway Billy is dangerous hurt and dangerous sick, too."

"Oh! my poor boy!" cried Mrs. Watts.

The fellow had purposely deceived in naming the place he was from, for the purpose of covering his trail, as clearly appears.

"And he sent you here?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, let's hear your story, my man. And, it will have to be a straight one, if you expect us to believe it, be sure of that."

"Dat is de kind of a story I am here to tell ye," declared the man, with an injured air. "De sick man said I would have to make it as straight as a string to you, or you wouldn't come wid me."

"Then make it straight. What does he want us for?"

"Says he has got work for you to do, an' he is too sick to be moved. He jes' comed to his self to-day."

"Poor Billy!" the mother muttered.

"You'd say so if you could see him, ma'm," said Dirty Dan, sorrowfully.

"But your story," broke in Silent Seth. "Let us have that now, in just as few words as possible."

"All right, sir; dat's what I'll give ye now. I work dere in Weehawken, on de coal dock, me an' my partner what's wid me. De other night we heard a faint cry fer help down in de water, an' we gits our boat jes' as soon as we could an' goes to de rescue. We foun' a feller floatin' up-stream wid de tide, an' by de time we got to him he was bout gone an' slipped off'n de stick he had been holdin' fast to."

"Oh! my poor boy!"

"We got him out an' took him home to my house, dough I'm only a poor man, an' den we called a doctor. His badge had showed what he was, 'fore dat, an' I had

made up my mind to do my best fer him, 'cause I stand in wid dem fellers over dere. Use ter be in dat line m'self. See? Well, he had been hit on de head, an' he didn't come to, an' dere wasn't nothin' 'bout him to show his name. So I t'ought it best to say not'in' fer a few days till he comed to. See? An' now dat he has comed to, he says I done jes' right."

"Well, go on, go on."

"All right, I'm goin' on. He told me who he was, an' den he sez, sez he: 'I want you ter go to my home an' get my boys an' bring 'em here. Tell 'em dey must come, an' no fail. Dey may feel speeshus of ye, an' if dey do, tell 'em to go to de police 'specter an' tell him all 'bout it, an' git him to send a man or two wid 'em. I mus' see 'em jes' as soon as I kin, an' you mustn't fail to bring 'em, even if ye have to fetch along a whole squad of Noo York police.' See? So here I am, and dat is what I hev comed fer; an' now git ready quick as ye kin, an' we'll go an tell de police an git a man or two an' be off. I don't want you ter feel speeshus of me."

"What's your name?" asked Seth.

"Dan Myers."

"Well, Dan, we'll go with you, just as soon as we can get ready. We'll take you at your word, though, and go to the police for a man to go with us."

"All right; so much the better. Dat will take time, dat's de worst of it, but de man said he didn't t'ink you would come alone wid me else; so, we'll hurry all we kin an' get back."

"We're ready now," announced Harry, who had followed Seth's example in grabbing up hat and coat. "Come along with ye."

Out Harry dashed, but Mrs. Watts detained Seth a moment.

"I am suspicious of that fellow, Seth," she cautioned. "Look out for him, for he may mean you ill."

"So am I suspicious of him," agreed Seth, "but we'll put him to the test. If he is willing to go to Headquarters for a couple of detectives, we'll know he is telling the truth."

"That's so; if lying, he would not go there."

The man had followed Harry down, and now Seth hastened after them to the street, when they set out in the direction of Police Headquarters, Bill Hodgers with them.

Harry questioned closely on the way there, but the answers were prompt and satisfying, and suspicions were allayed.

Still, they kept on, till almost at the very steps of the place.

There, as the men showed no disposition to hang back, but were ready to keep on, Silent Seth called a halt.

"It's all right, Harry, I think," he said. "It will only waste time to stop here, now, so we'll go with them."

"That's my vote," Harry agreed. "If it was crooked they would never let us take a pair of detectives in with us, so, we'll go on."

"Dis was all a fool trip, den," growled Dirty Dan. "Might as well get de men, long as ye have come fer 'em. What do you say, par'ner?" to Hodgers.

"That's what I say, too. Mighty long tack out of the way, this, all for no good a tall. May jes' as well git a couple o' men, now that we're here; my boat will carry 'em,"

"Your boat?" questioned Harry.

"Yes."

"Yer see, we rowed over," explained Dirty Dan.

"Well, let's be doin' one thing or the other, right away," urged Hodgers. "I want ter git back while the tide is right."

"Come on, then," urged Harry, turning away from the building. "It must be all right, Seth," adding in whisper to him. "They wouldn't dare come here if it hadn't been."

"That's so. The story is straight, far as I can see, and this ought to be proof enough to satisfy 'most anybody."

The boys led the way, the men following them, for a distance.

"Where is that boat?" Harry presently asked.

He was told.

"All right; let's get there without any loss of time."

"Sa-ay, I tell ye what ye didn't do, an' what you'd orter done," remarked Dirty Dan, stopping.

"What's that?" inquired Seth.

"Why, dis: While ye was dere at de police coop you'd orter stepped in an' told 'em where ye was goin', anyhow. Dat would made it sure safe fer ye, fer we kin see ye doubt us a little, even yet."

"One might go back an' do it even yit," suggested Bill.

"No, it's all right," said Seth. "We trust you, now. But, if anything is crooked, don't forget that we are well-armed and that we won't hesitate about using our weapons."

Oh! dat's all right, Cully. We ain't 'fraid of nothin' of dat kind, ye know. But, we want ter deal fair wid ye, same as your boss said. He said he knowed ye would come fast enough if we 'lowed ye to fetch a copper with ye, an' dat's what ye have been asked ter do."

They talked on as they walked, and ere long were at the dock.

At the end of the pier was the boat, with one man in it, and they were soon aboard and on their way across the river.

They talked but little, then, but enough was said to let the boys learn that the third man of the party was a broad-spoken son of Britain, and he seemed a jolly sort of fellow.

By and by, Harry awoke to the fact that they were not going in the direction of Weehawken.

"How's this?" he demanded. "Thought you came from Weehawken."

"Too much tide ter get there, my lad," explained Bill. "We'll have to land at my brother's shanty here in Jersey, and take the hoss-cars."

"Can't ye make Weehawken?" cried Dan, as if half in anger. "I ain't got no nickel fer no hoss-car, I ain't."

"If you want to try it ye kin," answered Hodgers. "It'll be a good two hour pull."

"Den I don't want none, t'ank ye. Land here in Jersey an' I'll walk."

So, Bill pulled straight on, heading for one of the frowning coal docks that line the river on that side for a distance.

"Don't you boys git skart, now," Hodgers finally said, as they drew near to the dock. "We go right under here, an' you want to hold your heads low so as not ter git a bump."

Harry and Seth had little to say, but, each with a hand on a ready revolver, was ready for whatever was to come, or thought they were. The boat came nearer still to the dock, finally slipping under a wing of the pier between the piles, and skillfully guided, was at last landed alongside the steps leading up to Bill Hodgers's shanty.

CHAPTER XIII.

A KNOWING ITALIAN.

"HILLO, Tom!"

So Bill Hodgers called out as soon as the boat had been made fast.

"Guess he ain't to home," he added, after a second's pause for an answer. "But no matter, the door is open, and we kin go right up."

He laid hold upon the rude steps and began to climb up, his motions being seen by the dim light that came down through the trap from the broken ship's lantern hanging in the room above.

"An' don't you boys be a-skeert," encouraged Dirty Dan. "Dis is a dark hole, I low, but it ain't half as bad as it looks when you git used to it."

"My heyes! hit ain't 'arf as bad has some hof the 'oles halong the muddy Mersey," remarked Dusty Dick. "'Urry hup, now; 'oo is next? Dan, you har' the nearest; hup with 'e."

"All right!" Shanley cheerfully responded. "Don't you lads fall over," he gave caution, "for it would be a dark hole to fish ye out of. See?"

"Christopher Columbia! a feller can't see very plain, and that's a sworn statement," declared Happy Harry. "Seth, hold fast to yourself, and take care when it rocks."

In a moment more Dan had disappeared, and Harry followed him, Seth standing next and Dusty Dick last.

No sooner had Harry gained the floor above than he was seized by Bill Hodgers, and at the same time Dusty Dick laid hold upon Silent Seth's arms with the strength of a giant.

Hodgers could handle Harry with ease, being so big and powerful a man, and Dan lending immediate aid with Seth, both the lads were prisoners almost before they could tell what had happened to them, or how it had come about.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed their three captors, then. "How was dat for a bluff trick?" demanded Dirty Dan.

"You measly thief!" exploded Happy Harry, anything but happy now. "What is the meaning of this? What are you going to do with us?"

"Ho, ho, ho! Oh! but this is the richest I ever seen!" cried Hodgers. "We are goin' to retire ye from business for a time, that's all; haw, haw, haw!"

"My heyes! but ain't they hastonished, though!"

"We'd astonish you, if we had half a chance," scolded Harry, wildly. "What a pair of soft fools, to fall into your trap!"

Silent Seth was as stoical as an Indian.

There they were, and what was the use of their crying about it?

"We had planned dat skeem all out fine," said Dirty Dan. "We t'ought dat beefin' 'bout fetchin' a detective 'long wid ye would t'row ye off yer guard, an'so it did, too."

"It was a measly mean trick, that's all I have got to say about it," Harry still growled.

"Hall his fair hin love hand war, don't ye know," quoted the stoker.

While thus talking the hands of the prisoners had been secured, and that having been done, preparations were made to gag them.

"You kin holler all ye want to," said Hodgers; "that won't hurt nothin' in here; but we'll gag ye 'fore we take ye out—that is, if Dan is goin' to take ye out o' here; that is for him to say."

"Dey'll stay right here," Dan assured.

"Say, now that you have got us in a fix," spoke Harry, "what has happened to our boss? We know that you know about his case."

"Dat's where you make your mistake, Cully."

"You mean to say you don't know?"

"Dat's de fack."

"You lie."

"Look out! If you wasn't helpless, I'd swipe ye one fer dat! I tell ye we don't know nothin' about Broadway Billy a tall. Ain't dat so, Bill?"

"True as the compass," Hodgers agreed.

"Well, it's pretty hard to swallow, all the same," Harry held out. "What brought you to us, to play this trick on us, if you know nothing about him?"

"Didn't say we didn't know nothin' 'bout him," rejoined Dan, to that, "but we don't know where he is an' haven't seen him. Dat's preachin', dat is. We do know dat he is out of de race, dough."

But you did not have a hand in putting him out of it?"

"Nary a hand, Cully."

"Well, you can't deny a fellow the right to think what he pleases about what you say, even if he isn't fixed so that he can say it out 'loud."

The three captors laughed.

"You are welcome to think what you please," said Hodgers, "if ye don't think it out too loud. We hadn't nothin' ter do with your boss, an' don't know where he is no more'n anybody else, but it's safe to guess he's at the bottom of the river, from all tell."

"And you are going to send us to join him?"

"Hardly. We ain't bad as that. We're only goin' to board you awhile, so's to keep ye out of mischief."

"Well, you have got us fast enough," here put in Seth; "suppose you enlighten us as to the object of your making us prisoners. It will take a big load of worry off our minds."

"Christopher Columbia! yes!" echoed Happy Harry. "You might do that much for us, anyhow, seein' that you have got it all your own way and we ain't in it at all. I will be dead on your hands o' curiosity, if you don't let us into the matter. Who is at the bottom of it?"

"Great Scott! what a chinner!" exclaimed Dan. "But, if ye die ye will have to die, fer we can't 'lighten ye any; dat wouldn't do, Cully. See? But, you needn't hope ter see your boss here, fer we don't know nothin' 'bout him, as I told ye. Dis is another lay. See? Can't tell ye nothin', 'cep' dat here ye are an' here ye are goin' to stay."

"Well, that settles it, then," said Harry, resignedly. "We are safe from the fool-killer here, anyhow, and he must be looking for us, sharp, now."

The two lads were lying helpless on the floor of the rude shanty, where they had been laid.

It did not appear that there could be much help for them.

Taken as they had been, and the place of their destination wrongly given by their captors, the police would have a hard time looking for them, when it became known that they, too, were missing.

They were now gagged, not harshly and cruelly, but sufficiently to hinder their making much of a shout to draw attention, and another door was opened and they were carried into an adjoining room and laid on a bunk together, where they were advised to go to sleep.

And, as there was nothing else they could do, they finally did that.

The three rascals had a talk together, after which Dan and Dusty Dick took their leave, trusting to Hodgers to look after the prisoners for the night.

When the pair had gone, and were some distance away from the shanty, Dirty Dan came to a stop.

"Sa-ay, Cully," he drawled.

"Well, what his hit?" asked the dusty stoker.

"I don't like de idee of leavin' dem kids alone wid dat feller all night, do ye know dat?"

"Ay! And what's the reason?"

"He might play us a trick."

"Ah! Then Hi be 'anged hif Hi would do hit, heither! But, 'e can't heat them, hand 'e won't run haway with 'em; so, what's the matter?"

"No; but, he might play a trick on us. He could hide 'em, an' make me pay high to get 'em again. Bill Hodgers holds de biggest hand in de game, now. I've a notion to do him up."

"Hoh! no! that won't do, don't 'e know! That would knock 'e hout with the hother bloke, don't 'e know?"

"Yes, dat's so, Dick; you've got a level head, you have, so don't let me lose sight o' dat."

"Hi will keep hit hin your mind, mate."

"Den what am I ter do?"

"Hif you could trust me, Hi might go back hand spend the night with 'im, hif you say so. You could go back with Hi, hand 'ave hit hout with 'im. 'E won't trust you with the papers; you won't trust 'im with the boys."

"Dat's jes' it! Come on, Cully, an' back we goes."

And back they went, accordingly.

Their knocking brought a rough demand from the burly boatman to know who was there, and when told, he opened the door to them.

"What's the matter?" he demanded.

"Dis is what's de matter," answered Dan, promptly: "You won't trust me in full, Bill, an' I ain't goin' ter trust you in full. See? You are 'fraid of them 'ar papers you hold, an' I'm 'fraid of these boys. See?"

"Well, take the brats along with ye, then."

"No, you know dat won't do."

"Then what do ye want?"

"Me or Dick is goin' to stay with ye."

"Who said ye was? Have ye been 'vited to do that?"

"We're askin' de invite now, Bill Hodgers. See? Dis ain't no time to fool, it ain't."

"A fool will fool at any time, you lubber! Well, make up your mind quick which is to stay, an' let me git to bunk. Do you make fast to that?"

"Well, Dick kin stay, as he's my partner anyhow. I have got somethin' else on hand, or I would stay too. Dat's all, Cully. No need ter git mad, fer it's about as broad one way as it is long t'other. See?"

Dusky Dick stepped within, and the door was promptly shut again, and after talking for a moment through the door, Shanley went off.

He went again to Googin's Groggery, but the hour was later than he thought, so he went finally home.

The hour was still later when a dirty but intelligent-looking Italian entered one of the police stations there in Jersey City, asking to see the captain.

There was no captain there at that hour, but the sergeant asked his business.

"Mea wanta see da captain," the Italian insisted.

"Well, then, I'm the captain, if that will suit you better," declared the sergeant, to the amusement of the policemen present. "What do you want to see me for? Been stealing?"

"Oh! noa! me noa steal; but, mea gotta da biggest piece of news in da world. Mea can putta you on to da biggest thing you ever seen. Mea knowa thing or two, you can betta. But, mea musta see you ina da private; no tella it before anybody. You catcha on?"

While speaking, the Italian had somehow given the sergeant a private sign, and he did "catch on." Leaving one of the roundsmen in charge, he put on his hat and stepped outside with the fellow, where they had a long talk together.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRO AND CON.

On the Jersey City police force is a young policeman of whom mention should here be made, since he is to figure in our romance at its closing.

What his name is does not matter, since he has a sobriquet by which he is fully as well known. He is called "Lion Lon," a name given him by his fellow officers in appreciation of his lion-like bravery.

Upon one occasion, single-handed and alone, he entered, broke up and "pulled in"

a place of evil resort, taking his life in his hands in the attempt. It was an act for which he was greatly praised by his superiors, and from that moment he was called Lion Lon.

A good-looking fellow, about twenty-eight years of age, keen and shrewd, he is not infrequently called upon to do a piece of extra work in citizen's dress, and is in line of promotion to the detective rank, for he has seldom failed to perform his task with honor to the force and credit to himself. This to the reader by way of introduction.

On the morning following in order the events last recorded, Lion Lon was sent for to come to the office of his captain.

He went promptly, not knowing what he had done, or had not done, that could deserve censure.

Entering the office, he found the captain and the sergeant of the previous night closeted in private, and he was invited into their confidences.

"I have got a piece of work for you to do, Lon," his captain informed him.

"All right," was the ready offer, "if it is anything I can handle."

"I'm going to let you try it, anyhow. One thing, I want you to go over to New York and see the inspector—"

"Whew! Haven't you made a mistake, captain? Wasn't it the super you sent for, 'stead of me? What'll I do, talkin' to the inspector? Better pick out some other man for—"

"That'll do, now, Lion Lon. You are the man I want; you are lion enough for any job. Sit down, now, and I'll tell you a story the sergeant here told me and that led to my sending for you. And, then, tonight I want you to pull Googin's Groggery, with—"

"Great Scott! Why don't you knock a fellow silly at once and be done with it, captain?"

The captain laughed.

"That is the work I have laid out for you, anyhow, Lon," he said "and now for the story. It will make you open your eyes, I'm thinking."

Thereupon he imparted to the young officer the information that had been brought to the sergeant during the night by the mysterious Italian, and Lion Lon listened with interest.

"I'm in it," he declared emphatically, when the captain had done.

"Yes, I thought you would be. You will be let off to-night, and you must do the special work I have laid out for you."

Final instructions were given the young officer, and he went home to prepare for his special duty. What the outcome would be remains to be seen presently.

In the mean time there had been a visitor to the Headquarters in New York, no other than Broadway Billy's mother, who had come on an important mission, that of reporting the absence of Seth and Harry.

Her story was listened to with something of alarm by the officer in charge, for it looked as though this second blow must be as bad as the first. There could be little doubt of the fate of Broadway Billy now, was thought. He and his boys had probably been murdered!

However, this the mother was not told, but went home with such word of encouragement as could be given her.

She had not been gone long when Lion Lon reached the Headquarters.

He had brought a note of introduction with him, and was admitted at once into the *sanctum sanctorum*—so to say.

His story was listened to with keen interest, as well as the plans which had been arranged, and after he had been questioned on some of the points he was allowed to return with a favorable answer.

And so it was that, ere Mrs. Watts had been home an hour, after her visit to th..

police, word was brought her that cheered her heart.

Again, in turn, not long had Lion Lon been gone from the Headquarters when another visitor was announced.

This time it was Mr. Bradford Breamont. He was greeted with that cordiality his station in life and personal acquaintance warranted.

When he had taken a seat, he said:

"Well, I am here again about that Redwood affair, sir."

"Ha! something new has turned up? Perhaps the rascal has been found? But, what is it?"

"Why, I saw by the evening paper yesterday that his body had been found in the river, but now it seems that it was not his body after all."

"Yes, I know about that."

"Well, how do you explain the mystery?"

"Bless you, I don't explain it, Mr. Breamont. It has only added to the puzzle."

"Have you thought it all over well? But, of course you have, and have gone much deeper in it than I could hope to go. What conclusion have you arrived at?"

"What have you?"

"Well, it looks to me as though it may be a trick of Redwood's. That he has changed clothes with a dead man—I won't attempt to say how he came by the body, and put it in the river hoping that it would be found too late to be recognized and that the letters in the pockets would prove it his."

"That is not a bad guess. I had considered that point, but I hardly think that accounts for it."

"Not probable, eh?"

"There was too great a difference in the appearance of the two men. This fellow was a rough laborer of some sort; Redwood was slight and refined."

"Well, then, what has been your conclusion? Of course it was useless for me to try to think of anything that has not already been considered by you, who are trained in such work."

"It might be that Redwood was murdered, maybe not by this fellow, but somehow this fellow has come by his clothes."

Such an opinion, from such a source, needless to say, was idle talk.

"The fellow could not have been the murderer," the merchant objected. "He would have been the last man in the world to wear the clothes of his victim."

"Well, I guess you are right on that point. Suppose Redwood is alive, then, and is in disguise somewhere, having sold his other clothes, which, somehow, came into the possession of this man, who, in some way, came to his death."

"Can't agree with you there, either."

"Why?"

"He would not have left the letters in the pockets."

"Yes, there you are again. I see you are ready with such objections as I have already found. We may as well let the matter drop, for this time. But, there is nothing r at the office?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Redwood still under suspicion?"

"Certainly; cannot be otherwise. Wish he could be found."

"So do I. By the way, I have now another case of missing ones on my hands."

"So?"

"Yes; Detective Weston's boys are gone, now."

"You don't say! When, where, how? They were at my office not long ago, interested in this case of Redwood's."

"I know they were. They were lured away by two rough fellows who told them they had come from Broadway Billy and that he was lying sick at Weekawken. I fear they are at the bottom of the river."

"This is awful, sir!"

"Yes, you are right. What ought to be

done to a wretch who could do such work as that?"

"Hanging would be a hundred times too good for him, sir! I only hope he will be caught, and that the law will deal with him in severest measure."

"I am with you in that wish. Well, if you are able to learn anything, do not fail to let me know of it, for the solving of one mystery may lead to the solving of the other."

"You may believe me that I will not fail to do so. Would you advise me to put the matter into the hands of private detectives, in addition to the work you are doing upon the case, sir? I am eager to have it cleared up if that is possible. It is wearing."

"Yes, I suppose it must be. But no; let us have a little further time, and I am sure we can bring something to light. By the way again, there is something I have thought to ask you."

"What is that?"

"Why, Miss Rollson, who was here—"

"Was here?"

"You know her, then?"

"Why, yes; I saw her last night at her home."

"Indeed? But that is only a matter of news. What I was about to say—she is firm in her belief that Redwood is innocent."

"Only natural, sir."

"But she has presented some very striking facts. They were engaged, and he had been practicing all manner of economy in order to pay for a house he had been putting up. Had he been stealing, it ought not to have worried him much how to pay for his house."

"Artful, sir, maybe. The fact is I was not aware that he had any money with which to begin even a dog-house. I have been thinking of all this, and it strikes me as a neat trick. You see, he has been in danger for a long time, for any little research through the accounts was liable to show up his crooked work, and he might have had this plan going to help him play the innocent."

"Then you cannot take any stock in his innocence whatever?"

"I don't say that; I only wish he could be cleared, for I liked Dick first-rate, and his downfall was a blow to me."

"Here, then, is my question: *Is there any one else in that office, or in the establishment, who could possibly be the guilty one? Any one who could possibly make Redwood shoulder his guilt?*"

"Not one. It is out of the question, so far as I can see. And the greatest thing against it is the disappearance of the suspected man himself. No one but I myself could be suspected, and I hardly think you are prepared to say I am my own thief, are you? No, no; no apology; I don't mean it, as you can see. Besides, would I, or could I, do away with Dick? Hardly. No, the poor fellow is the guilty man."

CHAPTER XV.

THE GROCERY RAID.

BILL HODGERS was found in his shanty when Dirty Dan and Dusty Dick dropped around to see him that evening.

During the day they had taken turns at guard duty over their prisoners, who, though kept securely confined, had not been abused or unduly deprived.

"Well, see you're on deck, Cully," Dan greeted.

"Yes, I'm here, and so's the prisoners," was the response.

"It's 'most nine now, and time we was gettin' to Googin's Groggery."

"Yes, s'pose it is, but we can't all three go, kin we? Who stays here to watch?"

"Hoh! don't let that worry 'e," broke in Dusty Dick. "Hi can do that like a mice, don't 'e know, pals."

"Will ye do it?" asked Dan.

"Ay, Hi will."

"Den come on, Bill, an' we'll be goin'. I have found Dick out well enough to know he's to be trusted, you bet."

"Hif Hi thought Hi wasn't trusted, hit his never ha minute Hi'd stay here, hand that Hi tell 'e right hout. But, you ought to know Dick Brick by this time, me 'ear-ties."

"That's all right, Dick," said Hodgers. "You take keer these lubbers don't git away from ye, an' you won't lose nothin' by it."

You are one of us, and we'll do what's right by ye, if ye stick to your colors with us through thick and thin. We are on blue water now."

So it was arranged, and in a little while Dan and Hodgers set forth together for Googin's.

When they arrived they took their accustomed places, and set about whiling away the time in a sociable manner while they awaited the coming of their man.

The place was filled, on this night, and it seemed as if the evil den was trying to let itself loose to break the record of its own evil reputation. Never had it been known to be more reckless.

It was quite late when "His Royal Nibs" put in his appearance, and a cheer greeted his coming.

A treat was looked for, and no one was disappointed on that score.

"Well, what is de word?" asked Dan, when the seedy coachman had taken a seat at the table and greetings had been exchanged.

"I am here to talk straight business with you," was the response. "Our mutual friend has said just what he will do, and he will do just that and nothing else. If you do not accept, he is done with you."

"Mebby so."

"A sure thing. He will defy you and bid you do your worst."

"Well, let's hear what it is," said Hodgers. "Then we kin tell ye what word to take back to him."

"First, did you get those cubs?"

"You bet."

"Did you drop 'em overboard, as I suggested?"

"No; dey are alive and kickin'," said Dan. "We ain't puttin' no rope 'roun' our necks."

"But, that was the bargain, that you were to put them out of the way! That is what you will have to do, before your work is done."

"They are out of the way," declared Bill. "They can't trouble you, long as we keep 'em where we've got 'em. You needn't worry about any trouble out o' them."

"But, they must be silenced forever, I tell you!"

"Den you will have ter be de one ter do dat," returned Dan, emphatically. "We don't mean ter do it."

"All right; I can do it. You take me to where they are and I'll soon dose them. But, before we go any further let me tell you just what word our friend has sent to you."

"Yes, yes, let's hear dat."

"Well, it is just this: He will give you a thousand dollars, provided you place these papers into my hands, all of them, and put those goslings out of the way for all time. There you have it; what are you going to do about it?"

"Dem don't fit us a tall," murmured Dan. "We wants a cool t'ousan' every t'ree months, an' we will hold de papers an' de kids in a safe box, you bet! It will be to our vantage ter do so. You han' over de money, an' we'll do de res'. See? We are on de make, we are, you bet."

"You won't make anything more out of our friend, though, for he is done with you unless you take his offer."

"All right; den we lets de kids go, wid

de papers, an' dey will take 'em where dey will do mos good. See? Dat's jes' de way it stands wid us, Cully."

"Where are the goslings and the papers?"

"At my shanty," spoke up Hodgers.

"All right; let's go there and see them. I must see them, anyhow, before I can make any sort of bargain."

"Dat's all right: don't blame ye fer dat. Come along, Bill, an' we'll let him feast his eyes on 'em once. Den if he don't come to time we blows out on him, dat is all."

"Where is the other rascal who was in with you?" asked Larkins.

"He is at de shanty guardin' de rats," explained Dan.

"Well, let's be going at once, boys."

They arose from the table and moved toward the door, but at that moment a shrill whistle was heard, a dozen hands fell upon the trio and they were handcuffed before they realized what had happened.

Everything was excitement in an instant.

A score of detectives and policemen in citizen's dress were making arrests right and left.

Lion Lon, the leader of the descent, having cast off a disguise he had assumed for the occasion, was making the arrest of the proprietor.

Men and women were using sudden effort to get out of the place, but every door was guarded doubly, and they were like rats in a trap. It was a complete victory from the beginning.

"What means this?" Larkins cried, as soon as he could speak at all.

"It means that you are a prisoner," was the stern reply, from the man who had hold of him. "The worse for you if you resist."

"Dis ain't no square deal, dis ain't!" protested Dirty Dan. "Me an' Bill here ain't been doin' nothin', an' neither has our frien', Mr. Larkins. We'll make it hot fer dat Lion Lon, you bet!"

Googin was pleading his case with Lion Lon, though the handcuffs were already on him, but it was useless to argue the matter.

As soon as the police had made as many arrests as they intended, the others were allowed to go out.

That they took advantage of this quickly enough need not be said.

As soon as they were gone, the prisoners were ranged in line, and leaving one officer to close and lock up the place, the others took their catch to the station, where they were looked for.

The ordinary prisoners were booked at once and sent below for the night, and after that the extraordinary ones were seen to.

These were three, Dirty Dan Shanley, Bill Hodgers, and their friend Mr. Larkins.

Besides these, there still remained three Italians.

"Well, Lion," asked the sergeant, "what is the charge against these men?" indicating the three named.

"Murder!" was the one word.

Two of the three turned pale, exclamations of fear dying upon their lips.

"We have done no murder," Larkins managed to say.

"How is it, Lon?" the sergeant questioned.

"See what these fellows have to say about it," the young policeman suggested, with a wave toward the Italians.

There were three of these, as said—one a young man, solidly built, and the others youths.

All attention was given to them immediately.

The eldest stepped forward, making some hardly noticeable changes in his appearance as he did so.

"Dusty Dick!" exclaimed Dan and Bill together.

"Ay, heven so!" the dusty stoker ac-

knowledged. "Hand Hi 'ave ha bone to pick with 'e, mates."

"An accursed detective!" exclaimed Larkins, upon whose forehead a dew of perspiration was now breaking out. "You have been played with, Dirty Dan!"

"And if them ain't two kids that we seen not a month ago, then I'm a dyin' dogfish!" cried the burly boatman. "Dan, we have been played for suckers, that's what's the matter with Hanner!"

"If I'd a' tought dat, I'd a' ripped him open when I first seen him," the enraged ruffian snorted.

"Hi can't 'elp what 'e thinks, mate," retorted Dusty Dick. "Hi 'ave 'ad me hown row to 'oe, don't 'e know. Mr. Policeman, just hash this man to remove 'is disguise, hif ye please," and he pointed at Larkins.

"Disguise!" Larkins echoed. "I in disguise? You never made a greater mistake in your life, you sooty dog!"

"Hi ham willing to heat me words hif Hi 'ave made ha mistake," was the cool rejoinder. "Take hoff 'is at hand 's red 'air hand whiskers, hand see what ye'll see, me 'earties," declared the stoker.

The score and more of policemen and detectives were standing around, now a very eager audience.

Lion Lon stepped forward to the man, and in spite of a show of resistance, snatched off his hat, hair and beard, leaving a very different person exposed to view.

Exclamations were heard on every hand.

The fellow was a fine-looking man, of noble appearance until one took a very close scrutiny.

"Ha! This looks as though there may be some truth in the charge that has been made," averred the sergeant in charge. "Who was the victim of the murder, Lon?"

"Harvey Carters, sir!"

The accused man clapped his hands to his forehead, reeled, and would have fallen had he not been supported.

The captain of the precinct was present, and he stepped to the front now, saying:

"Here is proof enough; the blow almost carried him off his feet, as you all have seen. At last will Henry Rollson be cleared of the terrible charge that was put upon him, thanks to Broadway Billy, prince of detectives!"

CHAPTER XVI.

EXPOSE AND CONCLUSION.

"CHRISTOPHER COLUMBIA celebratin' crackers an' cheese!" suddenly cried out one of the pair of dirty Italian youths, and, laying hold upon his companion, he whirled him out upon the floor and began to dance with him!

"This yanks the rag right off the arbor!" he added, after a sprightly flourish. "This beats all the Dutch in Bohoken! Excuse my excitement, gentlemen, but I can't help it. Have had to hold my tongue for 'most twenty-four hours now, and it's a wonder I haven't got lockjaw."

The words of the police captain, however, had taken such a hold upon the company, that little notice was taken of Happy Harry's outburst. All eyes were fixed upon the prisoner—him accused of murder, and each and all were ready to hear further evidence in the matter. And, as thus they stood for a moment, a door opened and others came in from an adjoining room.

These were, to the surprise of at least one man, Dick Redwood, Star Rollson and her mother, and a lawyer.

Dick Redwood had a bandage on his head, and was very pale; but there he was nevertheless—the real Dick.

At sight of him the prisoner was seen to start anew, and his courage seemed to give out entirely.

Star Rollson immediately stepped toward

him, and pointing with finger of the keenest scorn, cried out:

"Hypocrite! Murderer! Infamous scoundrel!" and then turning to Mrs. Rollson, she demanded: "What have you to say now in favor of Bradford Breaumont?"

Yes, he it was; Bradford Breaumont and "Peter Larkins" were one and the same person. And, even in the same moment, another great change took place before their very eyes.

The dirty stoker, Dusky Dick, threw off his hat and rough and ragged coat, and with a few hasty applications of a wet towel that had been prepared for his use, he removed the dirt from his skin, and—Broadway Billy, the young detective prince, stood revealed!

"Bravo! Broadway Billy" cried some of the officers who had come over from the metropolis to aid him, and the Jersey boys joined in a hearty cheer in his honor.

"Thank you, friends!" said Billy, bowing. "I am glad to be able to speak in my natural way once more, for that horrible dialect came near dislocating my jaws more than once. Don't faint, Dirty Dan; don't faint; if I fooled you that was not any fault of yours."

"You allus thought you was so mighty smart, Dan Shanley," sneered Bill Hodgers, "but you got taken this time, slick as grease."

"Was you ag'in' me, ouss ye?"

"I told ye I would git square with ye fer that dirty trick ye played me once, an' now I guess I have. I'm ter play State's evidence in *this* racket."

Everybody was talking; everybody was eager; to quote all that was said is not to be thought of.

But, order was soon had, and Broadway Billy was urged to tell his story.

Breaumont had now sunk down upon a chair, seeing that further denial was useless. He was pale and cold and shivered like an ague.

Dirty Dan stood with his head hanging, a sullen look upon his scowling face, the thought of murder clearly stamped upon his ruffian brow. In his heart he was already the murderer of Broadway Billy and Bill Hodgers.

The young prince of metropolitan detectives stood up beside the sergeant on the raised part of the floor, and when silence was had, addressed the company.

"My friends," he said, "the story I have to tell is one of vital interest to at least one man. That man is Henry Rollson, now a convict for life in the State Prison. You must be his witnesses, every one of you, to what you are about to hear from me now. This I say, knowing the uncertainty of life."

"Up to a certain point you all know the story of that eventful night. You all know that Dick Redwood came to Jersey City from Lynwood on a late train, and you suppose he took the ferryboat to New York. You know also that I had been visiting a friend here in Jersey City that night, and by comparing time you saw that it was probable I had taken the same boat.

"You were not wrong in your conclusions. Dick Redwood and I were on the same boat that night, but we did not reach the New York side of the river, for the very good reason that we were both thrown overboard in midstream.

"I was on the forward part of the boat, and my attention was drawn to some low but fierce words exchanged between two men. One asked the other to step to the rear so that they could talk without being overheard, and as they went through the cabin I made my way back among the wagons through the middle.

"Just as I came out in sight one of these men said to the other, fiercely: 'You shall never tell what you know!' and in the same instant he struck him down with a slung-

shot. I sprung forward instantly upon the assassin and grappled with him, but he was too heavy for me, and before I knew it, almost, he had flung me over the rail. And the next moment the other man was sent over after me.

"I am at home in the water, and, the thought coming to me, I instantly resolved to save my fellow unfortunate if possible. I swam to him, took hold upon him, and began a slow but steady pulling for the nearest shore. It was terribly hard work, and before I had covered a quarter of the distance I realized that I could never reach the shore and take the insensible man with me. I was on the point of letting go of him, to save my own life, when I heard the sound of oars and called for help."

"With help so near, I resolved to hold fast to my companion until the last moment, for I knew he might not be dead, but only insensible. It was, though, a tough tussle, and when this man, Bill Hodgers, drew us into his boat I was about done up. I was, in fact, unable to talk with him until he had rowed to his shanty by the coal dock, where I finally came around all right. And, by that time, too, the other man was showing signs of returning to consciousness, and together we brought him out, all right.

"Before that I had let Mr. Hodgers know who I was, and for a reason which I need not mention he thought it best to serve me, or help me in any way I might direct. And, too, we had already examined the pockets of the other man, to learn who he was, if possible, and it was by that means I got possession of the whole mystery, and understood the reason his life had been attempted. Dick Redwood had hunted down the murderer of Harvey Carters, and had brought the crime home to Bradford Breaumont! If he lacked anything in the way of proof, gentlemen, it has been supplied now, and more than supplied.

"Well, talking with Hodgers, I learned all about Dirty Dick Shanley, who was mentioned in the notes Redwood had made, and I saw that it was the opportunity of my life to work the case out from that point. His name of Dirty Dan gave me the cue to my assumed name of Dusty Dick, and with the help of Hodgers I donned that disguise and went forth in quest of Shanley. I found him, and what has taken place since then you are aware of. With Hodgers as my helper, we together played with Shanley like a cat plays with a mouse, and through him got the villain, Breaumont, into this trap in which he now finds himself. A greater rascal never disgraced the face of the earth. Hanging will be almost too good for him.

"Now, though I have been missing for some days, I have not been idle. I have probed this whole case to the bottom, with the aid and information given me by Mr. Redwood. But, shall I finish with this business of the arrest before I go further in the affair? Very well. Hodgers already had a dead man in his shanty when he took me there, a body which he had fished out of the river and which he had in mind to sell to some medical college. The thought came to me to put Redwood's coat and vest on it and let him take it and deliver it to the police in New York. I thought that course might bring out a clew, or something. Anyhow, it added to the puzzle, and has served the good purpose of keeping Redwood's whereabouts a profound secret from all. He has been taken care of by an honest family not far from the docks until to-night.

"When you left me to stay all night with Hodgers, Dirty Dan, I came around to this police station, told my story, and here with the sergeant laid the trap that has now been sprung upon you. I ought to extend a vote of thanks to you, I suppose, for the able manner in which you have aided me in bringing this matter home to the scoundrel, Breaumont, even if you had no intention of

betraying him. You should be more careful how you take up with new acquaintances. I did not remain long at Bill Hodgers's shanty to-night, after you and he had gone, but, fixing up my team as you see them, followed you to Googin's Groggery, where it was a part of the plan that we should be arrested with you, or, lend our aid if needed, just as circumstances turned the balance. The reason why I remained lost to my friends was, that I felt sure Breaumont would be on the watch to learn whether he had disposed of me or not, and might make another attempt on my life before I could entrap him, for he was equal to any villainy.

"Now regarding the murder of Harvey Carters, for which an innocent man is in prison for life: He was killed in a fit of anger by Breaumont, because Breaumont had learned that he, Carters, had learned that he, Breaumont, had been robbing the firm of Ridgeroad & Woodpath. Breaumont knew that Rollson and Carters had quarreled, and so he fastened the evidence upon Rollson, in a most skillful manner. Dirty Dan had witnessed the crime, made that fact known to Breaumont, and had been drawing money from him ever since. This Redwood had noticed; and, at last, following Shanley one day, cornered him and made him confess the whole matter, under penalty of being turned over to the police if he refused. This gave Redwood the winning cards in the game, and he had everything about prepared to put the authorities on the matter when Breaumont discovered it and laid a scheme for putting him out of the way. His meeting him on the ferryboat was a part of the scheme, and only for my happening to be on hand, his fate might never have been known. The stain of guilt would have ever rested upon his name, while the guilty wretch would have escaped.

"The wretch, too, had a double object in having Redwood out of his way, for he loved this lady, Miss Rollson, Redwood's promised wife. Had he been successful in his evil design, he would have always, perhaps, been the honored and respected merchant; but, Providence stepped in. As I have heard my dear mother say many a time, They that put their trust in the Lord shall not be confounded; and I believe it, for this lady is a Christian if I ever met one, and she has never doubted but that her brother would one day be cleared of the terrible charge under which he suffered. That day has come.

"To you who have helped me, I must return my thanks. I have a word of praise for Lion Lon, for I never saw a cooler leader in a raid in my life. I guess you older men will say the same. If you ever get in trouble over in Gotham, Lion Lon, or want any help there, don't fail to call on me. I'll gladly do what I can for you. I'd like to work with you once on some case that would try our wits and nerve; you are about my style. And now, what more can I say? Here is the end of a case in which I have worked under cover, so to say, but in which I have tumbled out on top, at the ending."

Then he was cheered, and every one present, save the prisoners, stepped forward to shake hands with the matchless detective.

The prisoners were then committed, except Bill Hodgers, who was to appear as State's evidence upon some points of which he had knowledge.

On the following morning the case was heard, the proofs presented in full, and the prisoners were sent to jail to await their trial.

Breaumont would surely have hanged, but, the monster that he was, cheated justice, for he died from poison—how obtained no one knew.

In due time Henry Rollson was released from prison, pardoned and acquitted of the crime, and those who had believed him innocent from the first were happy to welcome him back to liberty once more. He ever in-

sisted that his sister's prayers had brought it all about.

Later on there was a wedding, the happy couple being Dick Redwood and Star Rollson. Dick had been promoted to the position Breaumont had so terribly disgraced, and that little cottage was finished in a hurry and splendidly furnished throughout. And present at the wedding were Broadway Billy and his team, and Lion Lon, the Jersey cop. It was a happy occasion.

That this case brought honor afresh to Broadway Billy and his "Tartar Team," and placed fresh laurels on their brows, may be well and truly said. They wore their honors modestly, taking it all in their matter-of-fact way—that is, Billy and Seth did, but Harry was more exuberant. It was a hard matter for him to bridle that rattling tongue of his, though he could do so when the occasion required, as well as Seth could talk when talk was needed.

"Here we are, yet!" Harry wound up the case saying. "They thought they had us *that* time, but they didn't! That is, they didn't have the boss. And, they wouldn't had us, either, if Broadway Billy himself hadn't been workin' against us. Who would 'a' thought of such a trick as *that*! No use trying to squirm out of it when the boss takes hold of ye; hey, Seth? But, never mind; we waxed 'em, and we can wax any kind of pizen diffikilt that has a mind to crop out when we are around and ready for business! And we're ready, every day of the week, you bet!"

THE END.

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